



MSTourHer

master in sustainable
tourism development:
cultural heritage,
environment, society



School of Environmental Studies, Geography and Applied Economics
School of Digital Technology



Department of School of Management Science



IREST (Institut de Recherche et d' Etudes Supérieures du Tourisme)
Université Paris I Panthéon – Sorbonne

Out of Season:

A tourism perspective of Crete from a higher altitude

Master Thesis

Sergentakis Georgios



Chania Venetian harbor, and the White Mountains in the background [Ara Ko, 2012]

Athens, 2020



HAROKOPIO
UNIVERSITY



UNIVERSITY
OF THE AEGEAN

MSTourHer

master in sustainable
tourism development:
cultural heritage,
environment, society

Examining Committee

Dimitra, Kanellopoulou (Supervisor)

**Assistant Professor, Institut de Recherche et des Etudes Supérieurs en
Tourisme – IREST, Université Paris 1 Panthéon - Sorbonne**

Theodoros, Staurinoudis (Examiner)

**Associate Professor, Department of Business Administration,
University of Aegean**

Eyaggelia, Georgitsogianni (Examiner)

**Professor, Department of Home Economics and Ecology, Harokopio
University**

Ethics and Copyright Statement

I, Georgios,Sergentakis hereby declare that:

- 1) I am the owner of the intellectual rights of this original work and to the best of my knowledge, my work does not insult persons, nor does it offend the intellectual rights of third parties.
- 2) I accept that Library and Information Centre of Harokopio University may, without changing the content of my work, make it available in electronic form through its Digital Library, copy it in any medium and / or any format and hold more than one copy for maintenance and safety purposes.

Dedication page

This Master Thesis is dedicated to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Sergentakis.

Quote page

"I found what I wanted on the top floor of a ruined Venetian palace: a large, lofty room with a view in three directions. To the south, over roofs that stretched like fields to the fields themselves, were the White Mountains, looking less white where they were still untouched by the purer white of the first falls of snow. To the east, more roofs, or bits of roof, or ruins. Westwards, the best view of all, the only view in the whole town with nothing ugly in sight: the harbor." (Fielding, 2013)

Acknowledgements

Upon the completion of this Master Thesis, I would like to express my gratitude wholeheartedly to my supervising Professor Mrs. Dimitra Kanellopoulou of IREST - Université Paris 1 Panthéon - Sorbonne for the guidance, support and encouragement provided throughout my research and the implementation of this Thesis.

I would also like to exceptionally thank Mr. Paris Tsartas, Mr. Theodoros Staurinoudis and Mrs. Eyaggelia Georgitsogianni for their constant aid in scientific and mental level, provided during my journey towards the completion of this Thesis.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to express my profound gratitude to my colleagues for their constructive assistance in the finalization of this Thesis.

Table of contents

1	Introduction	10
	Methodology	14
2	An Alpine Atlas on Tourism	18
2.1	(Re)-Discovering Mountain Tourism in Europe	18
2.2	Tourism impact on mountainous rural mountain local communities.....	19
2.3	Bottom-up local rural community innovation, past and present	26
2.4	So which are the implemented policies in Europe regarding mountain tourism?.....	28
3	Olympic Community Summit Meeting	32
3.1	The Mediterranean as a conceptual valley- common values of mountain people and EMbleMatiC*	32
3.2	Diversification of the Tourism product in Greece as a sustainability tool for the mountain communities	34
3.3	Research on Winter Tourism capability of Crete.....	36
4	Ski like a God or a Cretan tragedy?.....	42
4.1	A Quantitative approach on the visitors' perspective	42
4.2	The White Mountains of Crete.....	51
4.3	Sfakia, "The Stronghold" of Winter Tourism?	59
4.4	Ai Yannis the dead-end village resurrected by local entrepreneurship.....	61
5	Conclusion	70
	List of Figures	71
	References	72
	Annexes.....	78
	Questionnaire	78
	Interviews	80

Abstract in Greek

Η διπλωματική αυτή εργασία θέτει ερωτήματα σχετικά με την αναγνωσιμότητα και την κατάσταση της Κρήτης ως προορισμό χειμερινών διακοπών και διερευνά πώς το επίπεδο συμμετοχής των ορεινών κοινοτήτων στην εφαρμογή βιώσιμων πρακτικών θα μπορούσε να αποτελέσει παράγοντα ανάπτυξης, ενσωματωμένο σε ένα μοντέλο προώθησης του τουρισμού. Τα δεδομένα συγκεντρώθηκαν χρησιμοποιώντας έντυπα ερωτηματολόγια, ενώ τα δεδομένα που αναλύθηκαν περιείχαν μεμονωμένες απαντήσεις καθώς και πολλαπλά σύνολα απαντήσεων. Εφαρμόστηκε επίσης, περιγραφική ανάλυση των συνεντεύξεων, συγκρίνοντας τα αποτελέσματα με την υπάρχουσα βιβλιογραφία. Τέλος, η παράθεση μαρτυριών παρέχει τα μέσα για να συνδεθεί το επίπεδο συμμετοχής των ορεινών κοινοτήτων με το τοπίο, ταξιδεύοντας μέσα από τα χρόνια, αγγίζοντας την τρέχουσα επιχειρηματική δραστηριότητα σε ορεινές αγροτικές περιοχές. Τέτοιες δραστηριότητες στοχεύουν σε ένα πιο βιώσιμο μέλλον για τις κοινότητες μέσω της εκ νέου εφεύρεσης των ορεινών δραστηριοτήτων και της σύνδεσής τους με τον τουρισμό, μακριά από το μοντέλο του μαζικού τουρισμού.

Key Words: χειμερινός τουρισμός, τουρισμός βουνού, βιώσιμος τουρισμός

Abstract in English

This master thesis raises questions concerning the recognizability and the status of Crete as a winter tourism destination and researches how the mountain communities' level of engagement in sustainable practices implementation could trigger development, nested in a tourism promotion schema. Data had been gathered using distributed paper questionnaires, while the data analyzed contained individual responses as well as multiple response sets. Descriptive analysis of interviews is also implemented, comparing the outcomes with the existing literature. Lastly, a testimonial collocation provides the means to connect the mountain communities' level of engagement with the landscape through the years, touching the current entrepreneurial activity in rural mountainous areas. Such activities aim to a more sustainable future for the communities through the re-invention of mountainous activities and their connection to tourism, steering away from the current model of mass tourism.

Key Words: winter tourism, mountain tourism, sustainable tourism

1 Introduction

Are the visitors of Greece aware that apart from the summer vacation islands, there are high mountains covered in snow during the winter? Do people that spend their holidays in Crete, enjoying long stretches of beach, know that they stand few kilometers away from one of the highest mountain peak in the Balkans? Is it possible to promote an alternate tourism model in Crete and would it be beneficial for the local communities and the businesses?

Winter Tourism as a S.I.T. (Special Interest Tourism) product is a tourism definition confusing from its genesis. It is already defined as a seasonal tourism type vague, lost and misunderstood. If we could engage ourselves in drawing its outline, we could say it ranges from adventure tourism, ski, ecotourism, touring, sport tourism, leisure etc. (Coccossis & Tsartas, 2001).

In the late 1990s the winter tourism ski industry becomes important to various regions, both economically and socially by providing a valuable addition to the summer tourism industry and helping to combat the problem of seasonality. As Getz (1986, p. 112) comments within the context of ski development at Cairngorm (ski resort area in Scotland): “The major advantage of winter tourism is its potential for creating all year jobs. Without it, little would be gained in terms of population stability or growth”.

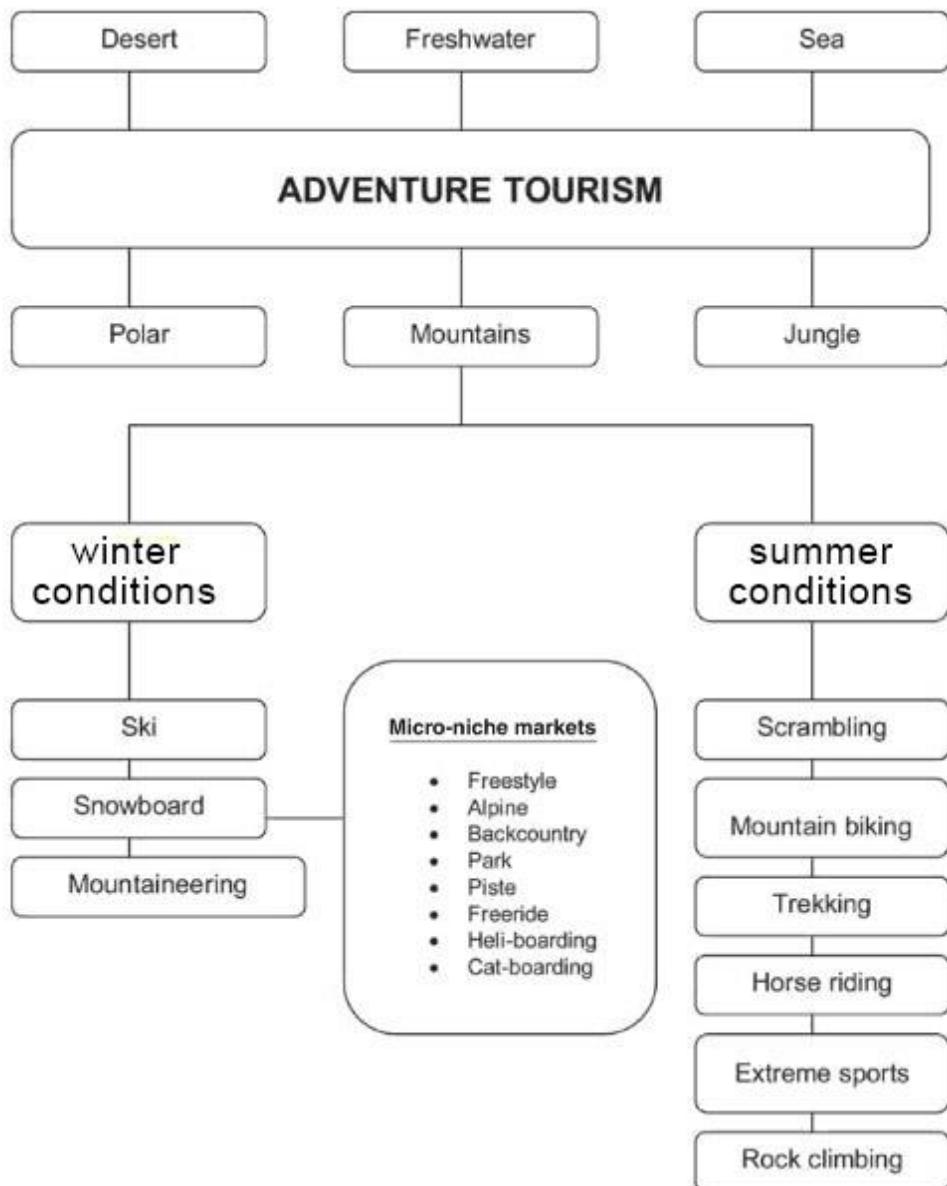


Figure 1-1 Tourism variations linked to seasonal weather conditions

This wide range of possible activities is the starting point of researching the potential of Winter Tourism in the island of Crete. Visitors have the tendency to seek and combine a variety of activities to engage themselves with while travelling, visiting unique places and interacting with local people (Saatsakis, 2017). Local communities may be interested in offering these kind of activities and generate new income through tourism. Development could be a new reality for forgotten and/or remote areas and thus the communities' life could be benefited. Businesses would grab the opportunity and new services would be offered. The natural landscape would be protected and sustained.

The World Tourism Organization (1995) suggests that sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems.

The current tourism model in Greece is the “heliocentric tourism” model where tourism development and promotion is orbited around sea-sun-leisure on the coastal area (Varvaressos & Soteriades, 2007). Mountains have never been incorporated into national and regional development plans due to the country’s prevailing tourism model. Agricultural properties located in upland areas are small-sized, low productivity units; the manufacturing sector faces serious procurement difficulties; and the tertiary sector has not thus far been seen as a development priority in these areas. Indeed, the unplanned development of mountainous areas has resulted in natural and human resources going to waste, rendering existing gaps more intense (Chirotis & Coccossis, 1992) (Mich, Franch, & Martini, 2005). During the last years there have been some attempts to develop and promote mountain tourism, leading to the construction of twenty-one low performance winter resorts and ski centers in Greece. (Figure 1-2) The dubious quality of these centers was the result of the country’s heliocentric image, the recreational nature of snow sports, the low rate of local participation in mountain tourism activities, as well as the limited volume of private developers.



- Location of Greek ski centres**
1. Parnassus (Fterolaka, Gerodovrachos), Boeotia
 2. Tymfristos– (Velouchi, Diavolotopos), Evrytania
 3. Dirfis– Euboea
 4. Olympus (Olympus, Vrissopoulos), Larissa
 5. Pelion (Portaria, Chania), Magnesia
 6. Pertouli, Trikala
 7. Kissavos, Larissa
 8. Metsovo (Karakoli, Pintos), Ioannina
 9. Seli (Chrisso Elafi, Seli), Imathia
 10. Naoussa (Tria pente Pigadia)
 11. Pissoderi, Florina
 12. Vorras (Kaimaktsalan), Pella
 13. Vitsi (Vermio), Kastoria
 14. Vassilitsa (Diasselo), Grevena
 15. Falakro, Drama
 16. Lailias, Serres
 17. Pagaio, Kavala
 18. Helmos– Kalavryta, Achaea
 19. Mainalo (Ostrakina), Arcadia
 20. Lefka Ori, Chania
 21. Antalofos, Xanthi

Source: Greek National Tourism Organisation (GNTO), 2006.

Figure 1-2 Ski resorts in Greece [GNTO, 2006]

The tourism industry operates by appropriating environmental resources, and suggests that the tourism industry cannot be sustainable and viable if it disregards conservation and quality of life issues that threatens the local populations (Wearing, 2001).

Mountainous regions in Greece are rural areas, scarcely inhabited, and developed in villages and settlements over ~ 700 meters. Economy is based on agriculture and animal breeding. Rural areas are in most occasions not touristically developed. There is little agreement and coordination in those areas on to what kind of image to project and promote (landscape, people, culture, quality and uniqueness). Visitors to the countryside are not aware of the different possibilities to explore and get to know the destination and its value. The currently implemented model of mass tourism has the purpose of maximizing the income and therefore sustainability have been of little importance. Tourism has proven to be a major contributor to the goals of global

sustainability, eradicating poverty and establishing environmental protection schemes. (Anderson, Bakir, & Wickens, 2014)

Alternative tourism has been considered the opponent of the dominant mass tourism model and, at the same time, a kind of energetic protection of the environment. Its demand, from both foreigners and Greeks (Cocossis & Tsartas, 2001), has increased over the years, and it is not by chance that it is proposed as a development model in areas with special environmental resources that need to be protected.

Rural area residents are often skeptical concerning any possible touristic development, for example in the mountainous rural areas of Crete, having experienced and witnessed the negative effects of mass tourism (heliocentric tourism) along the islands' north coastline. Their concerns are solid as regional and national tourism development policies have in general been focused towards the maximization of profit as mentioned before (Anderson, Bakir, & Wickens, 2014). The local communities have rarely been part of the planning and the inhabitants daily lives has been deteriorating.

Sustainable tourism development in rural areas is constituted by well-coordinated and integrated tourism activities. Social alienation which causes a person to desire different leisure, ecological and cultural experiences has also become a reason to equate a tourist destination. The impact and the effect of nature based tourism activities held primarily in a natural setting is dependent on the natural environment. The evolution in the demand for mountain tourism has been dynamically influenced by social and cultural changes occurring at the end of the 20th century. Leisure visits have become highly dependent on series of factors, such as quality of service, environment authenticity and landscape genuineness (Varvaressos & Soteriades, 2007).

This research will examine the hypothesis that mountain tourism and winter mountain tourism could be developed towards the assistance of local mountain communities to a sustainable future.

Methodology

The goal is to research the problematic on a particular area of study, Crete, in Greece and try to feed the international debate on the matter by collecting field data and by accessing to discourses that are often marginalized or not easily accessible. The following case study is a product of statistical analysis of collected data with the usage

of distributed paper questionnaires. This analysis contains individual responses as well as multiple response sets. Secondarily, a descriptive analysis of conducted online interviews is implemented, juxtaposing the findings with the literature, vigorously convulsing between facts and testimonies of the last 70 years that frame the living tissue of the Cretan mountain society. The study forms a reciprocal mosaic that is the 3rd element of the methodological analysis.

The method used more in particular is the methodological triangulation which involves the implementation of different kind of methods to study the problematic. This includes qualitative and/or quantitative methods, plus researches results from case studies which are then compared to the findings, on the way to build a credible result. These findings may come from interviews, surveys, questionnaires, etc. The benefits of triangulation include “increasing confidence in research data, creating innovative ways of understanding a phenomenon, revealing unique findings, challenging or integrating theories, and providing a clearer understanding of the problem” (Thurmond, 2001).

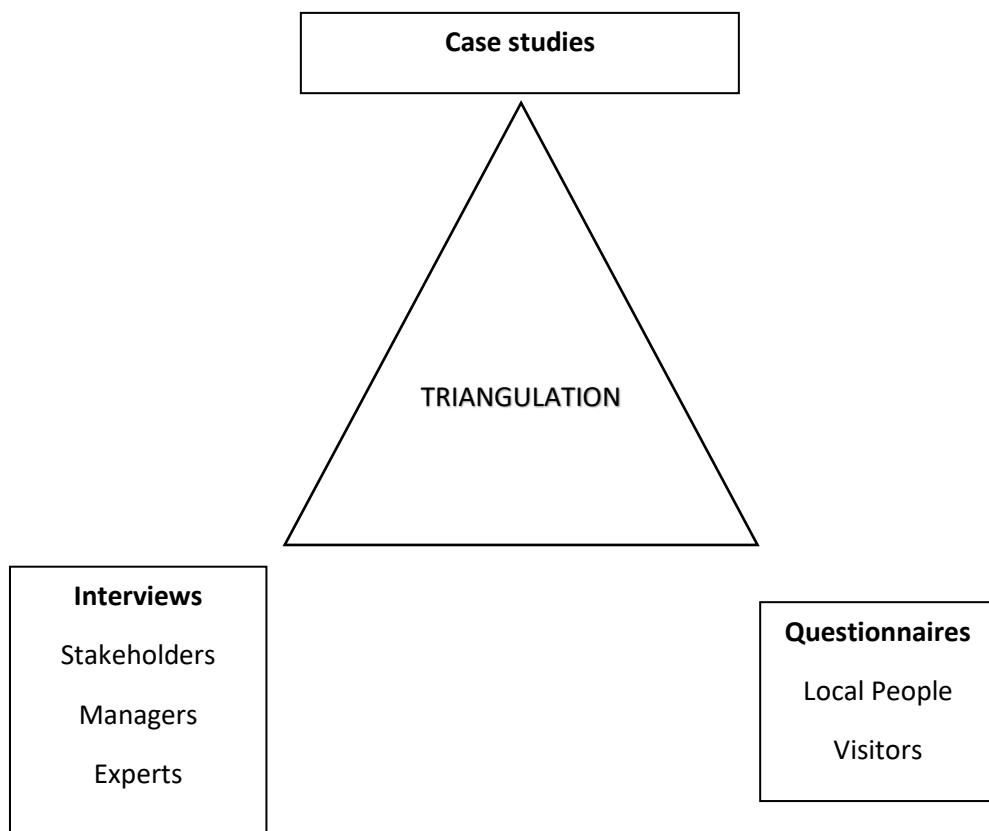
Semi-structured or structured interviews of representative participants are the most common method of data collection in qualitative research (Sandelowski, 2000). Researchers have primarily conducted face-to-face interviews (Polit & Beck, 2009); but with advances in technology, multiple options such as telephone, videoconference, email, and text message interview methods for data collection now exist (Oltmann, 2016; Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014). This article focuses on the email interview. Email exchanges are emerging as an alternative method for conducting interviews in qualitative research (Gibson, 2010; Walker, 2013).

Date	Location of Interviewee	Identification of interviewee	Interview type
17/10	Heraklion	(Giannis) Business owner	Semi-structured, e-mail
29/10	Chania	(L.) University researcher	Semi-structured, e-mail
29/10	Ai Yannis, Sfakia	(Antonis) Hostel owner	Semi-structured, e-mail

Table 1-1 Interview table

Triangulation can operate within and across research strategies. It was originally conceptualized by (Webb, Campbell, & Schwartz, 1966) as an approach to the development of measures of concepts, whereby more than one method would be employed in the development of measures, resulting in greater confidence in findings. As such, triangulation was very much associated with a quantitative research strategy. However, triangulation can also take place within a qualitative research strategy. In fact, ethnographers often check out their observations with interview questions to determine whether they might have misunderstood what they had seen: Bloor (2011) reports that he tackled the process of death certification in a Scottish city in two ways—by interviewing clinicians with a responsibility for certifying causes of deaths, and asking the same people to complete dummy death certificates based on case summaries he had prepared. Increasingly, triangulation is also being used to refer to a process of cross-checking findings deriving from both quantitative and qualitative research (Deacon, Bryman, & Fenton, 1998). Triangulation represents just one way in which it may be useful to think about the integration of these two research strategies (Bryman, 2012).

Apart from various scientific literature, Oppermann's (2000) ode to Triangulation and his motivational conclusion in 'Triangulation—a methodological discussion', urged me to implement this method in my research: "it's time for tourism researchers to take on 'new' challenges, namely systematically trying to add knowledge to the field rather than continue engaging in producing more and more case studies of limited additional scientific value. Why are researchers so afraid of testing other peoples' work in different settings, of using the same methods with other data, and of strategically combining several methods to reach their goal? Is the sheer pressure of 'publish or perish' too much? Does it force researchers into doing the 'quick and dirty' in order to add quantitatively to their CV? Tourism is strategically placed at the interface of so many disciplines that inherently tourism is an interdisciplinary field. This should stimulate interdisciplinary approaches using multiple methods as well as using different data sets and investigators in the quest for 'truth'."



*Figure 1-3 – Triangulation
method*

2 An Alpine Atlas on Tourism

2.1 (Re)-Discovering Mountain Tourism in Europe

Tourism is an important economic sector for Europe and represents a considerable factor of development and prosperity for mountain areas (Euromontana, 2011). There are no doubts that the tourism sector, generating many direct or indirect positive impacts, is a very important driver of economy. But at the same time, in order to protect the natural environment and to ensure the maximum tourism profit for mountain communities, the negative and precarious effects of tourism also have to be tackled. The issue is sensitive especially in fragile territories such as protected areas, national parks, etc. where a sustainable approach is essential but it is important in all mountains, which have the common feature of hosting rich environmental and cultural heritage which must be valorized but also preserved (Euromontana, 2011).

Steepness, elevation, harsh climates and limited space for permanent settlement characterize Europe's mountains. Over the centuries, their inhabitants have found many innovative ways to adapt to these physical characteristics. However, they also make mountain people and their economies vulnerable to the socio-economic crises and natural hazards that are becoming more frequent as a result of globalization and climate change. Economic crises, for example, have had far-reaching impacts on the ability of the European economy to create growth, innovation and jobs in mountain regions – and thus on their potential to contribute to the delivery of its first priority: "A new boost for jobs, growth and investment", defined by the Juncker Commission when they reviewed the Europe 2020 objectives. The impacts of the recent economic crisis have highlighted the need to enhance access to education and training in mountain areas in order to foster equality and create sustainable employment. As many mountain residents live far from major education centers, it is essential to find ways to ensure that mountain people have access to educational and training opportunities that do not require them to leave the mountains. In this context, information and communication technology (ICT) platforms are essential not only for modernizing education and training to eliminate the risk of digital exclusion, but also to facilitate networking and capacity building. Europe's mountains include towns that have been key locations for trade and industry. Today, most of these urban centers depend on conurbations around mountain areas where large

national and transnational enterprises are located. There is a lack of business models and ICT infrastructure for SMEs tailored to mountain circumstances; these are needed to improve the competitiveness of mountain towns and smaller settlements and reduce their dependency on lowland conurbations. Small-scale cultural diversity characterizes mountain areas and is apparent through the presence of diverse languages, customs and land use strategies. Mountain populations often include an increasing proportion of immigrants (new highlanders) from the lowlands, who provide new ideas while bringing socio-economic potential and new cultural inputs. To develop sustainable socio-ecological systems within mountain regions, new solutions including participatory governance and multi-stakeholder involvement are essential (Drexler, et al., 2016).

2.2 Tourism impact on mountainous rural mountain local communities

The definition of mountain areas in the geographic literature varies among authors. According to Geografski rječnik (Cvitanović, 2002), the definition of mountain area is very precise: “prominent and vast uplifted areas where the absolute elevation is over 1000 m; the areas are massive and have a rough terrain, surrounded by broad lower areas. Based on the elevation they are usually divided into lower (1000 – 1500 m), middle (1500 – 2000 m) and high (over 2000 m) mountain areas.

A big part of tourism industry research in mountain zones identifies with recognizing the features of members in various tourism activities in mountain and high mountain zones, where researchers give their attention in characterizing mountaineering as a type of experience recreation and focus less on mountaineering as a form of adventure activity tourism (Breivik, 1997). In literature, mountaineering is mentioned mostly as part of adventure tourism. According to Mitchell (1983), mountaineering is described as a group of activities which includes climbing, trekking, various programs of physical activity in the mountains, and ski mountaineering.

Most mountain areas of Europe are predominantly rural, and many have been subject to significant changes in their social and economic structures in recent decades. Declining agricultural employment and a growth in demand for services associated with the countryside (e.g. recreation and tourism activities) have encouraged rural-urban and urban rural migrations and tourism in general has acquired a central position in

thinking about the future of rural, upland and mountain economies across Europe (Godde, 2000). Rural tourism is not restricted to farm-based or agro-tourism, and can encompass all tourism based in, and making use of, rural landscapes. The attraction of rural landscapes depends on the qualities of their landform and land use. Most rural areas are used for some form of economic production such as forestry of agriculture and their landscapes are, therefore, highly influenced and modified by man's activity, although they contain no large urban developments (Burton & others, 1995). The differentiating features of rural tourism include its close association with the quality of the bio-physical environment, a high degree of multi-activity among hosts (with tourism businesses often part of wider ones), the importance of local culture and traditions, and the fragility of the rural economy in which it takes place (Stabler, 1997). Mountain regions, in most cases, are inaccessible, fragile, marginal to political and economic decision-making and home to some of the poorest people in the world (Messerli, 1997).

As many researchers have noticed, tourism has direct or indirect effects on the areas it is developed at. Several studies from anthropology, geography, sociology, community development and economics focus on the ways in which tourism developments, specifically those popular with tourists, alter the nature of local communities' life (Mair & Reid, 2007).

According to Galston & Baehler (1995, p. 175), tourism development is more than an occupancy induction plan; it includes vital decisions about a local community's way of life. Further research is needed, both factual and normative, to understand the monetary, cultural, political, racial and gender related implications to monetary development.

Monetary issues are not the only reasons why people in mountain regions decide to go after the tourism industry. Hosts often hope that the efforts put into developing a tourism business will sustain a long term goal, which partially depends on the sustainability of the project and includes a suitable environment, a reasonable monetary gain and a sustained feel of host community well-being (Godde, 2000).

While steepness, fragility and marginality are often constraints, exposing mountains to pervasive degradation, some of these attributes may also attract the 'adventure tourists'. Tourism development is an obvious means for achieving sustainable mountain development, particularly where other economic resources necessary for development are limited (Nepal & Chipeniuk, 2005). The effects of tourism on different spheres of

the mountain community and mountain environment are varied. The contribution of tourism to local economies is still relatively low, although it is considered to be one of the main contributors to national economies. Both forward and backward of linkages from tourism are weak. Mountain tourism also lacks a clear marketing strategy. Local communities have no other option but to rely on weak infrastructures and institutions. Organising and monitoring tourism in such cases can be difficult. Mountain tourism is often sensitive to exogenous factors such as security and natural calamities. Another important aspect of tourism is to have a team of trained people at the local level who possess knowledge about the local mountain environment and can provide quality services to visitors while promoting the local, cultural identity and who can assist in preserving the environment (Banskota, Papola, & Richter, 2000).

An essential stimulus to the development of the travel industry in mountain zones is the presentation of new methods of accessibility. The focal significance of accessibility as a factor in the advancement of the economy of mountain districts has been perceived by Allan (Allan, 1985), who notes that an adequate degree of accessibility can effectively break down the traditional pattern of the altitudinal zonation of land use. However, according to bibliography, accessibility does not create fool-proof roads to development. It is evident that further inspection of socioeconomic frameworks is required in order to determine the effects of road construction and subsequent changes in settlement structure. The alternative views approaches refuting the simplistic and resource destroying example of modernisation and leading towards the sustainable management of natural and societal resources is to be questioned. Road access might be of utmost importance from a perspective but a realistic approach states that this goal may not be pursued without considering the given limitations in mountain societies (Ives, 2002). In the case of mountain destinations and the mountain local communities, according to literature, it can be said that mountain and winter tourism policies would be supported by the community only if they have good intentions as far as environmental, economic, and socio-cultural impacts are taken into consideration. Residents are more inclined to support such policies if they understand that tourism causes positive environmental effects and when such effects exceed the negative effects. Residents that perceive tourism as a reason of increase of the level of investment at the destination and also public services of higher quality are most likely to support policies that aim at the sustainability of environmental and cultural resources (Brida, Disegna, & Osti, 2011). Price & Kim (1999), in one of their conclusions surveying

experts from European Union based organisations or the Council of Europe concerning the priorities for sustainable mountain development in Europe, mention that while socio-political and monetary issues in general tend to be given lower priority, three were identified as particularly important: empowerment of local communities in decision-making, in-field education and practice in conservation and development, and compensation (by downstream populations) for sustainable management. These issues have been widely mentioned in literature relating to sustainable mountain development. Studying the existing literature about sustainable development leaves no doubt that tourism sustainable development is connected with the following: “planning, development and operation of tourism should be cross-sectional and integrated, which covers the involvement of different state departments, public and private sector businesses, public groups and experts” (Pigram & Wahab, 1998). In addition to that, the following had been declared at the Millennium Conference of Tourism Leaders (held in Osaka, Japan in 2001): the development of sustainable tourism is only possible by implementing the involvement of the local community and thus making the development’s main goal to support the participation of the local society (Putkaradze & Abuselidze, 2019).

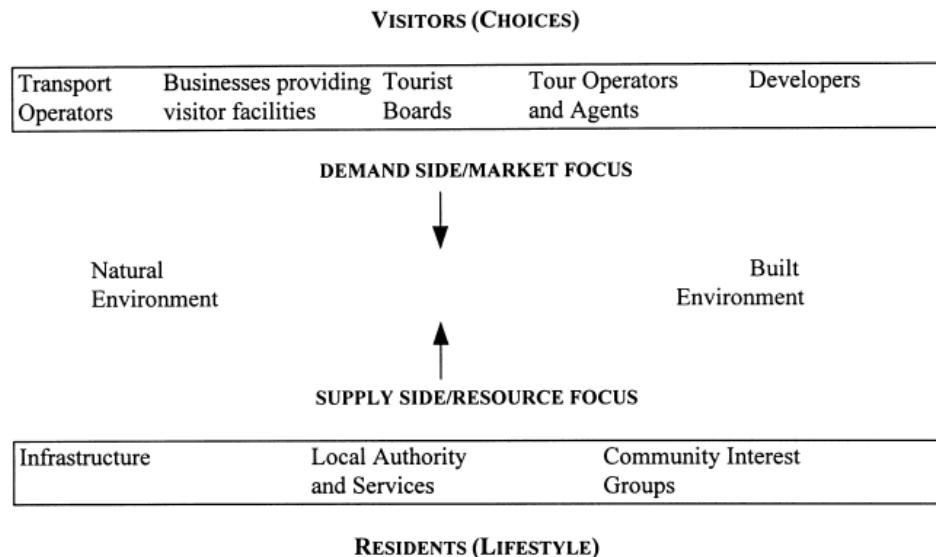
The sense of community is important in feeding community reinforcement of tourism development and may boost its long-term sustainability in a wider scheme for tourism development planning (Hall, Kirkpatrick, & Mitchell, 2005). Developing a sense of community motivates people to participate enabling them to feel connected, live in harmony and work together towards common goals. Sense of community is measured as the capacity of local people to take part in development activities (Cupples, 2005).

Research by Brida, Disegna, & Osti (2011) has shown that a disparity in the demographic profile of the local community determines a variation in the approaches and insights towards tourism effects. When recognising and defining new tourism policies, tourism planners and directors shall take into consideration the aging profile not only of tourists but also of the local people. Additionally, matters like percentage of local individuals labouring in the tourism sector and total years of residency within the community determine a different support towards tourism. As identified in the literature, local support is important for the formation of an entertaining tourism product. Other studies have outlined the different effects, the perceptions and approaches of tourism on the local community, and of residents towards tourism,

however, no research has shown how — and how much — these perceptions and approaches are being altered along with a change in the demographic profile of the local community. In a time of high movement of people, manpower and relocation, changes in the demographic profile of populations are very likely, so the demographic profile should be taken into consideration when managing tourism destinations and planning new tourism policies.

Policy and specifically its application, is a fairly understudied ground compared to other features of tourism such as the promotion and the competitiveness of destinations. On the other hand, the study of the development and implementation of policies for tourism and their effects may provide significant contributions to tourism research. Research into administration policies and the political affairs of tourism could aid in comprehending the decision-making making process, which could, in turn enable and develop policies for tourism development and more specifically sustainable tourism (Farsari, Butler, & Prastacos, 2007).

Middleton & Hawkins (1998) point out the supply and demand dipole, a state that should be recognized as being of dominant importance regarding tourism industry policy making (see Figure 2-1). The interconnection of hosts and guests through the natural and constructed landscape at any destination, and the impact on the actions of each based upon the action/inaction of each of the demand- and supply-side variables, reveals the diversity of stakeholders that must be considered during policy formation. Governments, as well as business associations, have in the past attempted to address to those wide-ranging groups' interests while still trying to conciliate the wider Western agenda of sustainable development.



Adapted from Middleton and Hawkins (1998).

Figure 2-1 Supply and demand dipole [(Middleton & Hawkins, 1998)]

According to the European framework, a number of measures are suggested for dealing with the negative effects of tourism but we would suggest that it never quite deals with the underlying difficulties that make sustainable tourism so challenging to achieve, explicitly, inequality and inequity between individuals and between generations (Welford, Ytterhus, & Eligh, 1999). Any attempts to support sustainable practices must be decided upon and organized regionally, with a distinct focal point. Decision-making and application should have a robust provincial and local focus in order for these values to become implementable practice (Berry & Ladkin, 1997). In regard to this point, (Middleton & Hawkins, 1998) have identified five management tools for local and provincial administrations. These are (i) reactive and proactive land-use planning regulations, (ii) reactive and proactive building regulations, (iii) the provision of sufficient infrastructure and the facilitation or denial of access to specific destination areas, (iv) investment motivations, monetary controls and guidelines and (v) influence over demand through pricing, licensing, advertising and information. Through policies and regulations focused at precisely controlling the demand and supply connection at a destination, they precisely determine the role that policy must play in the alteration towards improved sustainable tourism development. Additionally, they highlight the need for cooperative actions by administrations at the destination level in order for this change to adequately occur (Welford, Ytterhus, & Eligh, 1999).

Objectives	Measures up to 2000	Instruments
Types of tourism	Better management of 'mass' tourism. National and regional integrated management plans for coastal and mountain areas	Improved controls on landuse. Strict rules for new construction. Management of traffic flows to, from and in tourist areas. Visitor management—exchange of expertise. Pilot models of sustainable tourism. Strict implementation and enforcement of environmental standards on noise, drinking water, waste and water treatment and air emissions. Creation of buffer zones around sensitive areas.
Behaviour of tourists	Building environmental awareness. Liberalization of air and coach transport—TGV—network. Increase of marginal costs of use of private car and production of alternative transport modes. Better dispersion of holidays. Diversification of tourism, including rural and cultural tourism.	Development and promotion of codes of conduct. Multi-media campaigns and conferences. EU and national transport policies. Economic incentives, such as CO ₂ /energy tax and road pricing, and encouraged use of public transport. Co-operation and exchange of information. National and regional plans. EU regional development fund. EU tourism action plan and advisory committee.
Quality of tourist service	Promotion of new forms of tourism that care for the environment. Careful selection of accommodation. Building of environmental awareness in tourist areas.	Brochures. Professional training. Pilot projects. Professional training and educational exchanges of best practices.

Figure 2-2 Tourism effects and various measures

National indicators include:	Local/hot spot indicators include:
Area protected Endangered spaces Cultural protection Travel intensity Use intensity Key resource consumption Ratio of tourists to residents Health/social impacts	Destination attractiveness index Site stress index Consumption Ratio of tourists to residents Development density Percentage of foreign-owned facilities Environmental quality

Figure 2-3 Indicators

2.3 Bottom-up local rural community innovation, past and present

Nevertheless, rural areas have demonstrated to have their own dynamic and be sources of vital innovation. As the Cork 2.0 Declaration says “the rural potential to deliver innovative, inclusive and sustainable solutions for existing and future social encounters such as monetary prosperity, food security, climate change, resource management, social inclusion and the integration of migrants should be better acknowledged”. Research projects such as SIMRA (Social Innovation in Marginalized Rural Areas) (SIMRA is a project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme) and networks such as ECOLISE (Ecolise) are revealing the fact that thousands of villages and rural areas are doing just this. They re-confirm that smart villages exist and are simply places where local individuals merge their intellect and resources to plan and develop innovative answers to challenging local and global encounters. That way, they are engaging in varied forms of social innovation.

In rural populations around Europe, there are indications on how local energy and originality, parted with available technology, are being successfully implemented to address vital needs in areas such as transport, social care or education, but also fears and threats in areas such as environmental and climate change, which both have a local and a global aspect. Such community-led actions have demonstrated to be incredibly effective in externalizing long neglected issues that are else tough to confront- like reversing the tendency of population decline, unemployment, environmental deprivation and quality of life. This is particularly true in situations where communal action is aligned with and supported by public policy and initiatives that identify and encourage a bottom-up approach. Of concern is, however, that policy is falling behind and not following with developments on the ground. Obstacles and limitations are increasingly evident, frequently due to an interruption between local, grass root responses and policies and plans established in other levels. In the nonexistence of a supportive policy environment, it is dangerous that the opening for wider community participation and social innovation will be lost, making it ever harder in achieving positive change at a local level. The challenge, thus, is to create a more promising environment for rural villages: providing capacity building tools for local community

planning; removing governmental and directorial obstacles; and integrating the use of Rural Development Programs (RDPs) with other EU and national funds, while encouraging prospects to attract private financing (European Rural Review, 2018, p. 24).

There has already been implementation of RDPs throughout rural areas in Europe for the past 20 years. The Liaisons Entre Actions de Developpement de l'Economie Rurale (LEADER) initiative has been at the core of European rural development policy for these past years, under the values of bottom-up endogenous development community enablement. In its first three implementation phases, LEADER was carried out through independent local action groups (LAGs) that were in general constituted as cross-sectoral partnerships and which directly involved local people in dealing with and applying rural development projects in their territories (Ecolise). The conclusions of that research further highlight the wider critique of rural governance as a transformation more of style than of core material. Yet the added element that the research contributes is the imprint of an evolving trajectory over time. The positive statements of the respondents towards the notion of LEADER imply that there was a moment in its early manifestations when LAGs were truly able to reach out and stimulate more inclusive ways of participation in rural development, and that in certain European regions, LEADER had been able to play an important role in the decentralization of authority in rural areas. On the other hand, the study outcomes also clearly pinpoint the loss of this idealism as LEADER has been prolonged in successive programming stages and, in particular, since it was more fully integrated into the RDPs. One might speculate that this trajectory touches the borders of the willingness of the central state to immerse into “allowing” radical approaches to be made by rural governance, and the need to enforce control on a program that was possibly viewed as too autonomous and too reactive to local decision-making. Or it might simply be an accidental result of an over-enthusiastic approach to management and auditing. As it had been said, maybe that early and long implementation of RDPs has been a victim of its own success. As LEADER is being even more integrated into conventional rural development design and as LAGs are being exchanged with local government authority directives at least in some EU countries, the endurance of the original LEADER values seems even more risky. This possibility rises questions not only about the LEADER approach itself, but also about the broader direction of rural development and rural governance in Europe (Navarro, Woods, & Cejudo, 2015).

2.4 So which are the implemented policies in Europe regarding mountain tourism?

In the EU, tourism policy is among the fields where national authorities have absolute competency, regarding the standards of the multi-level governance and subsidiarity principle. Universal interferences at the level of the European Union are limited only to provision, organization and complement of some of the Member Countries' actions (TFEU, 2007). General Direction of the Enterprise and Industry (DG ENTR) is dealing with lawmaking schemes and communication from the EU side. Moreover, other EU guidelines which directly or indirectly involve tourism issues at the EU level are: regional development, domestic market, transport, environmental issues, public issues, agricultural and rural development, etc. (CoR, 2006). At national level, the application of mountain strategies is substantial on other policies and is often not dealt with clearly as "mountain matter". The tourism related guidelines are mainly sectorial, with specific variations (Nordregio, 2004). National involvements are prevailing for monetary and public issues, but also "the sub-national level (regional and local authorities) emerges as more and more relevant" (CoR, 2006, p. 132). In addition to supranational, national and sub-national tourism guidelines in Europe, various transnational guidelines and tools are shaping the growth of the tourism sector in the mountain areas (Norregio, 2004). Policies and regulations in mountain areas in regards to tourism are generally sectoral and under the national know-hows. Nevertheless, it "seems that policies originating from public authorities to develop tourism [in mountains] are weak, and that few initiatives are explicitly aimed at mountain tourism (Norregio, 2004, p. 159)."

Since tourism is an activity mostly based locally, provincial and local tourism actors should not be excluded from the mountain tourism policy. Good governance in tourism and its evolution into a sustainable scheme consequently need to include all stakeholders from the tourism sector by respecting guidelines such as integration, multi-sectoral vision, transparency, participation, accountability and efficiency (CoR, 2006).

In order to get a hold on mountain tourism policies at national level, let's see the two following issues that have already been studied: presence of a national tourism plan that refers to mountain tourism. Since it identifies a direction and sets the main concerns regarding the tourism sector, the national tourism plan appears as an ideal source of

information about the national government orientation towards the mountain tourism. Although the vast majority of the researched countries have not identified mountain tourism as one of their tourism strategy priorities, many of them are dealing with various types of tourism linked to mountain areas. This approach is justifiable, because in mountain areas through Europe one can find all types of tourism: mass tourism, special interest tourism (spas, religious, heritage monuments, hiking, hunting), rural tourism (summer stays, circuits, nature tourism, kayaking, rafting), resort tourism (riding, walking, week-end tourism, restaurants) (Norregio, 2004) etc.

As it has been recognized by all institutions and stated by the Committee of Regions, “tourism is a global phenomenon that is shaped locally” (CoR, 2006). Hence, regional governments play crucial role in the sustainability of tourism industry. It shapes identity of the region/city/territory; they determine internal strategy and successful implementation (CoR, 2006). As a result, design of tourism policies at regional level is essential for the recognition of regions’ touristic specificities and quality improvements. Following the recommendation of Riva Del Garda Action Statement (O.e.c.d, 2008), “to take full advantage of the potential of tourism development, a strong public sector management and a multi-actor system of governance should support tourism”.

In conclusion, the mountainous regions are more favorable to include references to “mountain tourism” than the national authorities. However, tourism strategies and regions of the same country demonstrate a different degree of activism (CoR, 2006). Consequently, policy recommendations to develop mountain tourism shall be addressed not only to national authorities, but also to responsible stakeholders at regional level.

The measures developed at national and regional policy level in order to support tourism in mountain areas include general tools such as the legal definition of mountain areas, mountain-specific legislation, research and training activities within these areas (Norregio, 2004) as well as policy support directly targeted at mountain tourism industries. Some regional policy tools assist firms and tourist providers by ensuring business friendly environment, attractive services and market-oriented programs (O.e.c.d, 2004). “Successful participation of firms and destinations in the global tourism market requires policy programs and instruments which address a wide range of challenges, such as overcoming the disadvantages of the small size of tourism enterprises by cooperation and participation in global value chains, upgrading the standards and quality of tourism services, improving the attractiveness of the tourism

labor market, reducing unnecessary obstacles to tourism development, developing coherent policy measures in support of sustainable tourism, notably for the use of natural and cultural resources, and strengthening institutional governance mechanisms that will allow tourism-related policies to maximize the economic and social potential of tourism (O.e.c.d, 2004)”. The objectives of these programs are: encouraging investments, improving the quality of services and increasing the size of tourism enterprises, upgrading the quality of software, the training of actors, enhancing co-operations, optimizing enterprises' financial resilience, encouraging new business start-ups, attracting new sources of finance for tourism enterprises (Euromontana, 2011).



Figure 2-4 This delineation of Europe's mountains was published in: European Environment Agency (2010) Europe's ecological backbone: recognizing the true value of our mountains. European Environment Agency, Copenhagen. The perimeter of the Alps is that used by the Alpine Convention. The boundaries of the other regions were defined for the purposes of analyses within this report. The numbers in brackets refer to the numbers of projects in each mountain region, as identified during the FP7 Support Action 'Mountain Sustainability: Transforming Research into Practice' (mountain.TRIP) (2009 – 2011).

3 Olympic Community Summit Meeting

3.1 The Mediterranean as a conceptual valley- common values of mountain people and EMbleMatiC*

*EMM - Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains Network

Mountains and the mountainous areas in general are part of the history of the Mediterranean people and play a key role in the region's major cultural and social alterations. The mountains perform a variety of functions and are symbolic for the people of the Mediterranean: They have been a refuge (of population and ideas), a place of physical and cultural purity, and a synonym for freedom (Politis, 2002). It was the "national region of the shepherds" (Zakopoulou, E., Kasimis, X., Louloudis, L., 2008) who associated with it like no other, bequeathing the mountainous community area the characteristic of semi-nomadism and immigration which was also the main characteristic of the entire Mediterranean society (Braudel, 1995). The Mediterranean mountains were the places of societies characterized by the slow paced recurring periods of rural life; a mountainous society that seemed unmoved and unaffected, yet underwent violent changes, which brought it into the 20th century facing incredible changes in the economic and cultural fields, which eventually led to rural exodus and population desertification (Nitsiakos, 2008).

Today, the importance of mountains remains fundamental to the populations of Europe and the Mediterranean. They are valuable water and energy resources, biodiversity centers (biological and cultural), rejuvenation and quality tourism sites and indicators of environmental vulnerability and climate change (Nordregio, 2004). The mountains are thus the "ecological backbone" of Europe (Hazeu, GW., Roupiez, LFS. and Perez-Soba, M., 2010). The massifs are not only a spatial - geographical designation, but also signify specific particular demographic, economic and social realities. And they have always been a vital part of the settlements that emerge on their land. These human communities have always principally linked their existence to their dependence on one or more productive centers - settlements.

As Vidal characteristically states, “the Mediterranean mountains resemble 'water towers' that at their feet produce human settlements” (Zakopoulou, E., Kasimis, X., Louloudis, L., 2008).

The importance of massifs is embossed in all forms of the expression of social life, from mythology to modern folkloric traditions. This significance is linked to innumerable mythological and historical events, which at the same time characterize the settlement of societies and the spatial positioning of settlements and human activities throughout the massifs. On the edge of the mountains, the mountainous settlements are organized according to the needs of the community in relation to production, climatic conditions, natural resources management, transportation, security, etc. (Nitsiakos, 2008). Identifying the significance of the mountainous environment but also fully aware of the finite nature of its resources, the mountainous Mediterranean communities are developing an authentic ecological activity, with key elements of self-organization, collective responsibility and management of communal lands. The overall goal of the EMbleMatiC project is to create and test a new and radically different tourism product based on the characteristics of the 9 mountains involved in the network and to offer an alternative to typical sea holidays. The project is organized around three strategic goals:

- rebalance tourist flows between the sea and the mountain, to lengthen the tourist season and to improve the economic benefits to the individual regions.
- co-construct and experiment with a "slow tourism" product offered in the mountainous area (which at the same time adjoins the sea), with the creation of 9 routes based on the flagship peculiarities of each area.
- improve the international recognition of unique features through joint communication actions that will direct areas to develop an identity based on the approach of sustainable and responsible tourism (Zapounidis, Partsalidou, Sancho Reinoso, & Serrat Mulà, 2019).

Psiloritis geotopes in Crete, contribute in the EMbleMatiC project. The variety and value of Psiloritis geotopes is of great importance and was the main reason for the Psiloritis Natural Park to be included, in 2001, in the European Geoparks Network and more recently in the list of the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network. According to the European Geoparks' charter, geotopes and the geological heritage of an area are not only supposed to be protected and promoted, but are also valuable tools that can be used together with the rest of the natural wealth and human resources of the area in order to

establish a sustainable development model in their territories Psiloritis Natural Park, with the support of AKOMM “Psiloritis” S.A. and the scientific assistance of the Natural History Museum of Crete, systematically works to achieve these goals as a European geopark and this publication is one of these activities aiming to enhance its geological heritage. The park extends from the northern coast and the Kouloukonas (Talea Ori) mountains to the Messara and Amari basins in the south and west, covering the broad Psiloritis mountain chain (Fassoulas).

3.2 Diversification of the Tourism product in Greece as a sustainability tool for the mountain communities

Development standards that have been applied extensively in Greece, that is, uncontrolled mass tourism, have proven disastrous for the areas in which they were applied. The development plan and the way it has been implemented have been developed with the aim of simultaneously increasing the activity of the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors in order to be interdependent and to the maximum extent possible. Naturally, negative effects will also come from the tourism-productive development of an area due to increased human activity. The priority is to preserve and rationalize the rich and unique environment of the mountain areas. Proper implementation of environmental protection measures before and after development will improve all the indicators that determine the health of an ecosystem. The project also aims to improve the state of the anthropogenic environment (seasonality, active population growth, and infrastructure). The development plan is based on the real needs and desires of the locals who need to be involved in drafting it. The social acceptance of such a plan is certain as efforts have been made for the tourist-economic development of the mountainous areas for years, but in the wrong direction, with the result that any investment will not contribute to substantial development. The rational management of mountain areas and the implementation of appropriate development plans on them can bring significant economic growth by contributing decisively to GDP, something that occurs almost exclusively in coastal areas (Konstantos, 2018).

According to Andriotis (2001), diversification of the tourist product is a strategy to achieve rejuvenation – and thus sustainability. Diversification in most cases is viewed as a means of getting away from mass tourism rather than offering a variety of activities

and services to support it and thus enhance the competitiveness of the existent mass tourist product. However, diversification has a synergetic character to goals of attracting both new markets and consolidating mass tourism. García-Falcón and Medina-Muñoz (1999) acknowledged it when suggesting other products (such as culture, health, sport) to be developed in Gran Canaria. Cases, such as the Balearics and Sitges in Spain, which have diversified their product to target new markets and make the traditional mass more competitive, have proved quite successful (Priestley & Mundet, 1998).

In order to ensure the diversification of the mountain sustainable tourism offer, to extend the seasons of tourism activities, to raise the profitability of activities in mountain areas, to improve the communication and the accessibility to mountain destinations and in particular to support local mountain communities and to enhance their benefits from mountain tourism, several actions could be carried out:

- Carry out studies for developing tourism strategies appropriated to local/regional opportunities
- Involve local actors in the definition of future actions and priorities
- Develop integrated touristic products and tourism itineraries, which could promote cultural and natural heritage in a sustainable way and integrate tourism with other sectors of the economy
- Facilitate cooperation and exchange of information between different tourism actors (municipalities, entrepreneurs etc.) at the local but also interregional and European level
- Exploit the internet opportunities and the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for communicating, attracting new tourists (accessibility of complete and attractive information on the internet, online booking system, development of integrated programs, etc.) (Euromontana, 2011)

Mountainous settlements of Greece need to be protected and promoted. These actions are expected to stimulate the local economy. An excellent example is the successful EOT program in the 1990s and 2000s, led by Aris Konstantinidis, for the repair and renovation of traditional guesthouses located in areas of particular natural beauty. (Evritania - Mani - Pelion etc.). Regarding the interventions for the survival of the mountainous settlements, these should be linked to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment (usually around or within walking distance, forests - rivers - lakes, etc.) and of the landmarks of historical events. The creation of natural and thematic parks in areas of exceptional natural beauty, as well as the establishment of folkloric-historical museums in settlements with significant cultural traditions, are actions that shall contribute to the flow of visitors, which may also boost the local

economy (Giannitsaris, 2019). Much of the territorial extent of modern Greece consists of mountainous terrain. Sparsely populated today, the mountains of Greece have had a long history of human use and habitation. Since Neolithic times, nomadic tribes have shifted their herds seasonally on mountain slopes, while villages and fortifications were built at high altitudes to protect populations from piracy, occupying forces or disease. The most dramatic demographic changes in modern times occurred in the post-civil war period after 1950, when rapid growth and development occurred along coastal areas and in major cities, virtually emptying the countryside, especially the mountain areas, of its people. Employment shifted to urban centers or to large-scale intensive cultivation, replacing the mixed, subsistence economy of rural areas (Godde, 2000).

3.3 Research on Winter Tourism capability of Crete

Crete has a long tradition in tourism and hospitality mainly due to its history and ancient civilization (Briassoulis & others, 1993). It is the largest island of Greece located to the southern end of Europe with an area of 8356 square km, and the fifth largest island in the Mediterranean. It is predominantly mountainous, three-fifths of its area lying 200m above sea level. A mountain range extends from east to west with peaks above 2000m. The island has 1,624 native plant species of which around 8.6 percent are endemic and the fauna amount up to 1,000 species (Anagnostopoulou, Arapis, Bouchy, & Micha, 1996). The recorded caves on the island number 3,500 and there are 100 gorges (Anagnostopoulou, Arapis, Bouchy, & Micha, 1996). Crete has many historical monuments of perfect architecture from all periods, from the Minoan civilization (2600 BC-1150 BC) to the religious Byzantium. The island is divided into four administrative departments (prefectures) Chania, Rethymno, Heraklion and Lasithi. It is renowned for its fabulous natural beauty, diversity of landscape, 1040 km-long coastline, mild climate and numerous cultural resources (Minoan palaces and other archaeological and historical monuments and sites) that constitute its principal tourist resources. With these rich cultural and environmental resources, the expansion of the Cretan tourism industry was inevitable.

Crete has expanded its tourism industry to a greater degree than any other region of Greece (Anastasakos & Lykos, 1997). Tourism is a vital contributor to Crete's regional economy producing 30 % of Gross Regional Product and it is estimated that approximately 40% of the local population is directly or indirectly involved in tourism

activities (Greek National Tourism Organization, 2016). In 2016 more than 3,6 million tourists visited Crete and approximately more than 13,4 million overnights stays were recorded, and the island have more than 250,500 thousand beds (Greek National Tourism Organization, 2016). Therefore, tourism can be considered as the island's largest industry and its largest employer (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003; Avgeli, Wickens, & Saatsakis, 2006).

Crete faces a high seasonality problem, stemming from the fact that during the high summer season, tourist facilities are utilized to capacity, while during the low season they are under-utilized and during the winter are almost unused (Vaughan, Andriotis, & Wilkes, 2000). In 2000, approximately 85% of tourist arrivals by charter flights on the island were recorded between May to September, and consequently the occupancy rates of the hotel establishments in these five months are over 75%, although during the winter occupancy rates fall to less than 20%. As Drakatos (1987) stated, seasonal concentration has considerable implications for the competitiveness of the island's tourism industry, as well as for the cost of the tourist product. Nevertheless, tourist arrivals in Crete show a lower seasonal concentration compared to other Greek islands (Andriotis, 2001). As Donatos and Zairis (1991) found, the Cretan tourism season lasts from April to October, whereas for most Greek islands it lasts from May to September.

Nowadays it seems that ski and other snow sports, as leisure activities, are characterized by standardization due to an imitation effect, in which post-modern values - i.e. identity seeking, individualism and narcissism - have been imposed on Western countries (Varvaressos, 2000). Moreover, this imitation effect sharply contributes to an expansion in the numbers of potential skiers, thus rendering winter sports more popular. The evolution of demand for mountain tourism has been dynamically influenced by social and cultural changes occurring at the end of the 20th century. Hence, leisure visits have become highly dependent on a series of factors, such as service quality; environment authenticity; and landscape quality (Amourous, 2001). These factors, which relate to the expansion of mountain leisure demand, have resulted from public social programs, a high rate of dissatisfaction with the quality of life in urban centers and the tendency to seek refuge in traditional values. Therefore, tourism development in the mountains has resulted from a correspondence established between socio-cultural expectations and leisure activities, as well as by the mountain environment, aiming at catering for potential visitors. (Amourous, 2001) (Wozniak, 2002) (Varvaressos, S. and Soteriades, M., 2003).

Snow sports were unknown in Greece for over three quarters of the last century, since the country's tourism product was associated with the heliotropic (the touristic search for sunny destinations, associated with mass tourism) image, and mountain tourism mainly concerned central and northern Europe. Greece's predominant tourism image, the lack of adequate spatial plans for mountain areas and the general political and socioeconomic context help to explain why at least initially, winter sports did not develop because of demand from the wealthier classes. The search of metaphysic and the need of self-accomplishment led to the appearance of the first mountaineers and consequently, the establishment of the first mountaineering clubs. These elementary bodies contributed to the construction of the first ski lifts in a very limited number of Greek mountain areas, in order to satisfy basic conditions. However, it seems that skiing itself did not markedly contribute to the increased participation of local communities, private developers and public organizations in mountain development. In Greece, these tourism development stakeholders have not been able to keep track of and assimilate the planning models developed and implemented in Alpine countries over the last century, even if belatedly (Varvaressos & Soteriades, Mountain tourism and winter resorts: A study of Greek ski centers, 2007).

Mountain tourism has a conception and approach different from seaside / balneal tourism, as for the planning implementation, due to specific geographic, economic, social and environmental conditions. Since the 1970s, the predominance of two winter resort models (the. French and Tyrolean) in Europe and other continents has not had any impact on Greek reality, which persists in promoting the concept of 'ski center' at both at the spatial level and type of planning implemented. The two different analytic concepts of 'ski center' and 'winter sports resort' clearly point both to existing differences regarding the structures of spatial planning and their management, and to the degree of infiltration and incorporation into local communities and economies (Varvaressos, S. and Soteriades, M., 2003). The term 'winter sports resort' denotes a situation in which zones more extensive than the skiing domains generally compounding a Greek ski center are taken into account in the planning approach. The explicative term 'ski center' incorporates spatial, structural and managerial weaknesses characterizing the sporting and recreational activity of skiing all over the country.



Figure 3-1 Psiloritis ski resort in Crete, 1970's [neakriti.gr]

It is worth stressing that the ski centers, which have emerged in Greece over the last thirty years, do not correspond to any of the new third generation specialized resorts (French and Tyrolean models). Most ski centers in Greece correspond more to those of the second generation. Comparative study of winter resorts in the Alps and Greece indicates two groups of clearly distinct factors that account for the current situation as being an outcome of the existing recreational context and technical, spatial and socioeconomic imperatives (Boyer, 2004) (Varvaressos and Soteriades, 2004), namely: (i) the diffusion of snow sports as a leisure and recreational activity, and the development of four models of winter Mountain Tourism and winter resorts: A study of Greek ski centers 135 resorts in the Alps have been the outcome of ski activity's popularization due to geographic and climatic factors in Austria, Switzerland and Scandinavian countries; and the resultant of holidays' extension in France, Italy and Germany; and (ii) the popularization of winter sports entailed the activation and participation of a bundle of dynamic technological, spatial, urban and socioeconomic factors, within the framework of mountain site planning, i.e. third and fourth generation resorts. The unilateral development of ski centers in Greece could be explained in terms the above-mentioned factors. The elaboration and implementation of new plans concerning the twenty-one ski centers in Greece could converge to the adoption of the adequate model, taking into consideration, on the one hand, the mountain's climatic, geographic and socioeconomic features; and on the other, the prevailing tourism development model in Greece (Buhalis, 2001) (Andriotis K. , 2005).

A series of tourist motivations and the elaboration and implementation of various planning approaches to mountain sites first led to the increase of potential skiers, and subsequently to the popularization of snow sports. Evidently, this phenomenon has grown gradually with the diffusion of skiing as a sportive and recreational activity; and the development of various winter resorts. The integrated third generation resorts (French model) oriented to sports and recreational skiing are those that contributed to the increasing popularization of mountain tourism and permitted a spectacular growth of accommodation stock, in spite of criticisms levelled at this type of resort, such as ‘ski factories’ or ‘rough tourism model’. Fourth generation resorts – polyvalent villages (Tyrolean model), rather than being doomed to cater solely to the recreational needs of a potential clientele, represent a ‘soft’ model of tourism development. Although these two resort models developed during the second half of 20th century in the Alps, the development of mountain tourism in Greece presents many weaknesses, as has been analyzed. In terms of planning – or lack of it - Greek ski centers correspond to second generation winter stations. Varvararessos and Soteriades (2007) therefore outlined the main features of the Greek ski centers as regards planning and organization. By no means exhaustive, they have attempted to cover several issues and aspects that should be considered by tourism policy makers and planners in the field of mountain tourism and winter resorts.

The model of ‘resorts – polyvalent villages’ correspond rather to intercommunity expectations and the model of ‘exnihilo integrated resorts’ could contribute to the popularization of snow sports tourism. Evidently, this task could be performed within a framework that should take into account the particular characteristics of mountain areas and introduce mechanisms and tools that would help define the background and the basis of a polyvalent policy for the whole country at national and regional level. Planning should consider the relative importance of local control and national policy in optimizing winter tourism’s contribution to mountain development. There is an imperative to combine local inputs and initiatives with national policy, as an effective framework for the management of sustainable and profitable mountain tourism (Varvararessos & Soteriades, Mountain tourism and winter resorts: A study of Greek ski centers, 2007).



Figure 3-2 **Psiloritis abandoned** ski resort building, [europost.gr, 2018]

4 Ski like a God or a Cretan tragedy?

4.1 A Quantitative approach on the visitors' perspective

This analysis utilizes survey data collected in 2019. The survey can be considered representative of English-speaking tourists in the area of Kissamos. The sample consisted of 38 individual visitors. The questionnaire distributed included 9 questions and the choice of answers varied from individual choice to multiple choice. In certain questions the choice of user generated content was possible, however, none of that content is being presented, as the data had been insufficient. Following is a brief description of the variables considered and of the frequency distributions for these variables.

In this analysis, respondents' ages ranged from 30-60+. The ages of the respondents were grouped into six categories. These categories went as follows: (Under 19, group 1), (20-29, group 2), (30-39, group 3), (40-49, group 4), (50-59, group 5) and (60+, group 6). The respondents were asked the question, "Who do you travel with on this occasion?" By looking at table one, you can see that 35 out of 38 respondents were over 50 years of age and over 70% of them is traveling either with a spouse or as a part of a group.

		Who do you travel with on this occasion?				
		With companion/partner/spouse	With family	With friends	As part of a group	
Age group	30-39	0	0	0	1	1
	40-49	1	0	1	0	2
	50-59	5	0	5	2	12
	60 +	9	1	2	11	23
	Total	15	1	8	14	38

Table 4-1 Crosstabular table Age/type of traveller

We notice that 50% of the repeating visitors (2nd time in Crete or more) has visited the island on 8 or more separate occasions. We have to note that this sounds quite

fascinating, however according to (E.s.e.e, 2018), is it a common characteristic of visitors that choose Crete with 46% of them being “repeaters”.

		How many days will you be spending visiting mountainous areas in Crete?				Total
		1-7	8-14	15-21	22+	
How many times have you been in Crete?	It's my first visit	7	14	1	0	22
	2-3	3	3	0	0	6
	8+	3	4	2	1	10
Total		13	21	3	1	38

Table 4-2 Crosstabular table total days/days in mountains

Destination loyalty in low peak seasons could help to reduce the seasonality. Sun and beach destinations attempt to communicate the advantages of returning to a particular destination in low peak periods, i.e., campaigns like “A Winter in Mallorca.” Loyalty behavior in seasons other than the summer months is an interesting issue to undertake in destination loyalty studies. Previous research on repeat visitation has chosen Mallorca, Spain, as an example of a destination with a high number of repeat visitations. Gyte and Phelps (1989) reported a total of 55% of repeat visitors, and a lower percentage of first-time visitors, 45%. In their study, two different resort areas were selected to give an overview of the patterns for the island as a whole, as well as allowing an investigation of possible variations due to the type of resorts. However, results showed no difference in the trends based on the differentiation by resort areas. Specifically, 64.3% of first-time tourists to Calpe (NR segment) indicated their intention to return other than the summer season. However, a higher percentage (85.3%) of repeaters (RT, i.e., those who had visited Calpe before) claim their intention to return other than the summer season. This finding is interesting for destination managers, because tourists who repeat the destination prefer to visit the destination other than the high season (i.e., summer), which reduces the seasonality problem (Kozak, Bigné, & Andreu, 2005).

Author/s	Variables	Main contributions
Kozak 2001	(a) Measuring the level of satisfaction with specific destination attributes (b) Measuring the level of overall satisfaction with the destination (c) Measuring the intention of return	(a) Repeaters are more likely than first-time visitors to return (b) Satisfied tourists are more likely to return
Kozak and Rimmington 2000	(a) Measuring the level of satisfaction with specific destination attributes (b) Measuring the level of overall satisfaction with the destination (c) Measuring the intention of return (d) Measuring the intention of recommendation	(a) Repeaters are more likely than first-time visitors to return (b) Satisfied tourists are more likely to return
Juaneda 1996	Measuring the intention of repeat visiting	(a) Repeaters are more likely to return (b) Satisfied tourists are more likely to return
Milman and Pizam 1995	Measuring the influence of awareness on repeat visitation	Familiarity has a significant impact over repeat visiting intention
Gyte and Phelps 1989	Measuring the intention of return	Repeaters are more likely to return

Figure 4-1 Repeaters' profile

As our observation evolves and with the aid of the variables “Number of visits in Crete” and “Days spent on mountainous regions in Crete” in this crosstab table we notice that 68% of the first time visitors plans to spend 8 days or more of their total

stay, visiting mountainous areas in Crete. Could that be an emerging un-researched trend towards mountain tourism in Crete?

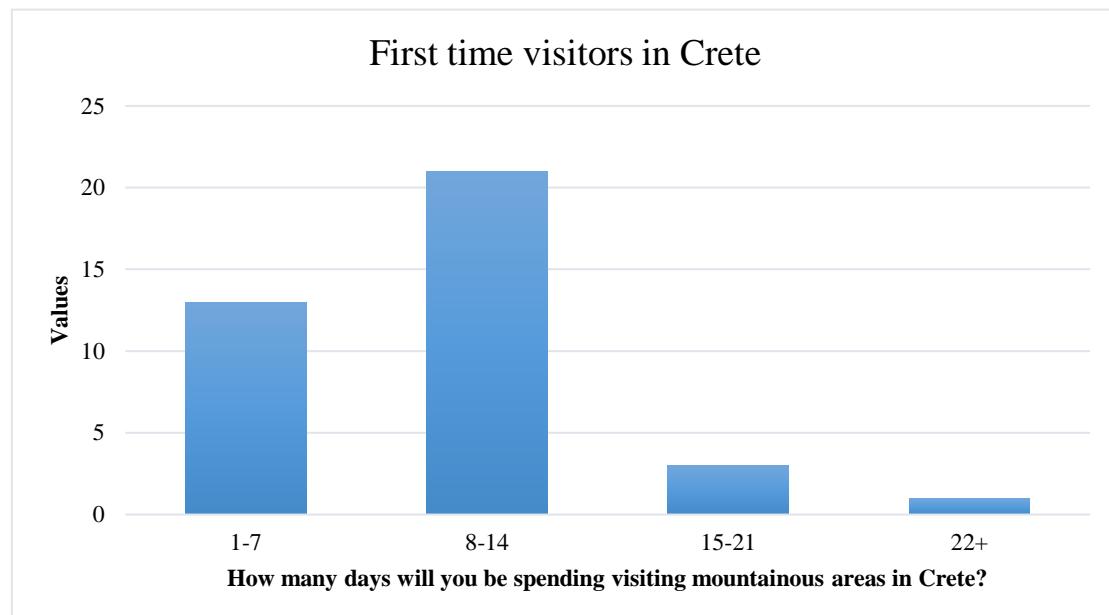


Figure 4-2 Days of visit bar chart

Following our analysis and the variable concerning the tendency of traveling during the winter season, only 29% answered yes. These visitors seem to have a rather adventurous side and choose to do Winter Sports, Mountain Biking, Hiking and/or Trekking.

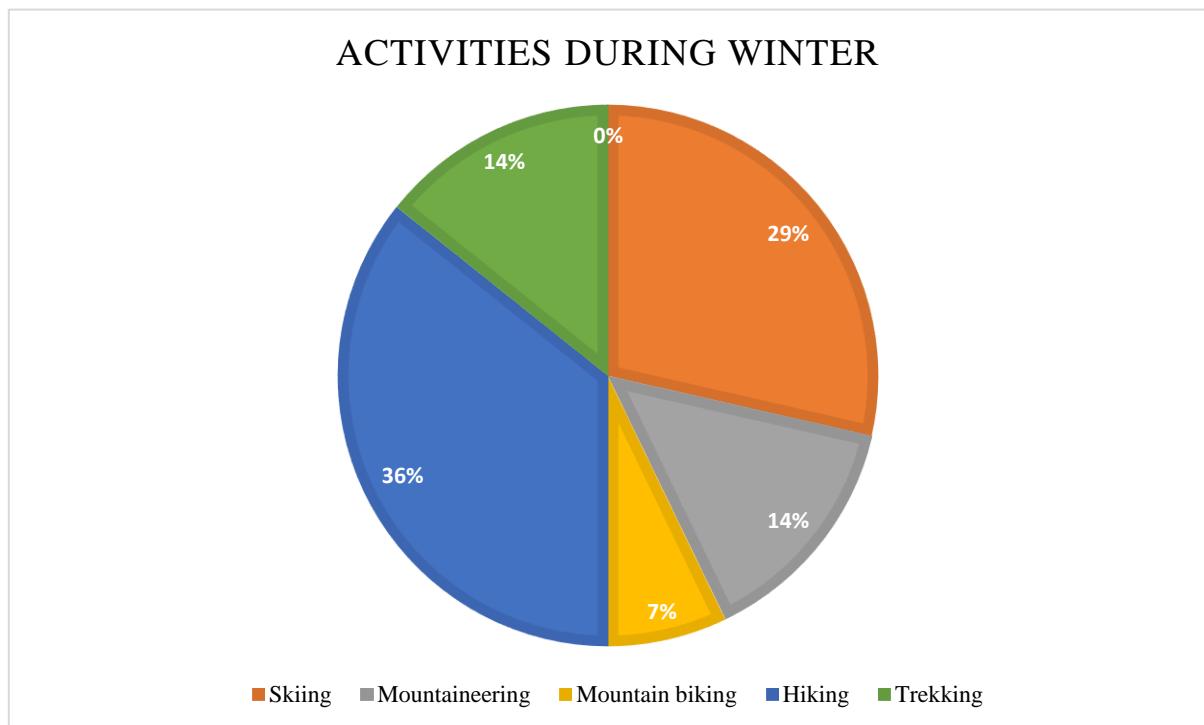


Figure 4-3 winter activities percentages pie chart

On the following chart we observe that a number of factors is of significant importance when the visitor is under the consideration of a possible winter destination.

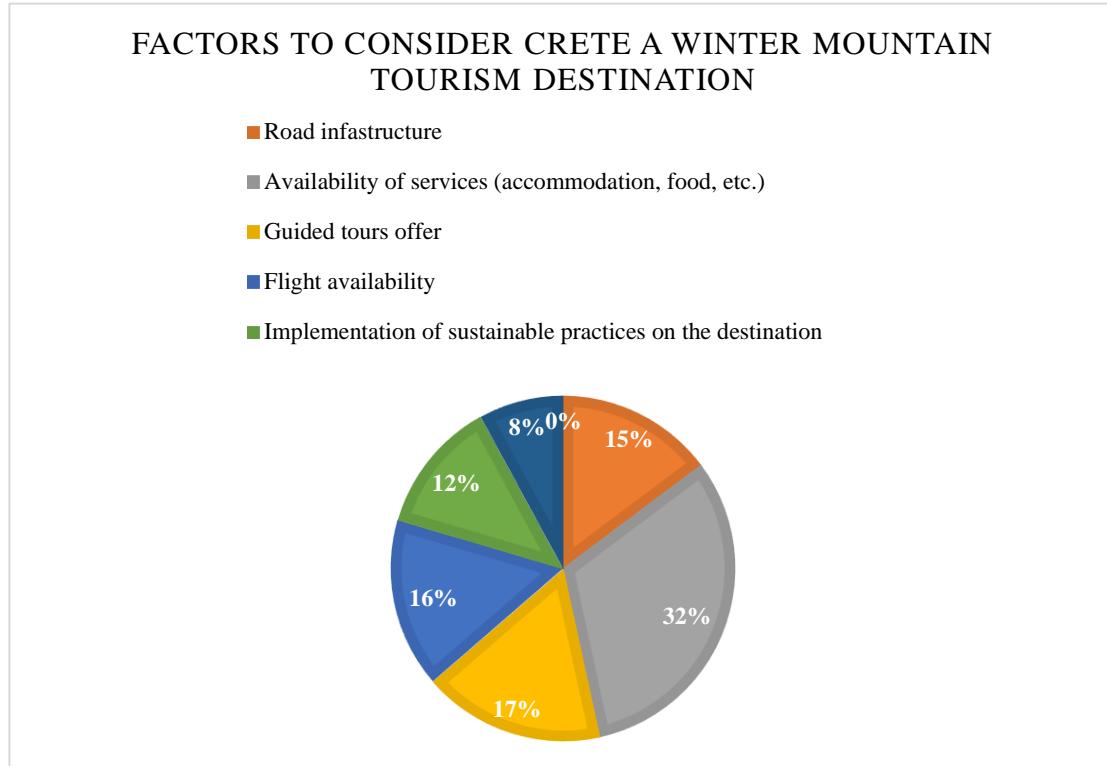


Figure 4-4 winter destination choice pie chart

One third of the visitors' replies focus on the availability of services, an answer that may be arising from the fact that many of the visitors are "repeaters" and are aware that

many tourism services close down after the end of the season in the described destination. My initial choice to separate the factors that affect the destination's image and therefore try to draw and categorize these replies as different types of data would

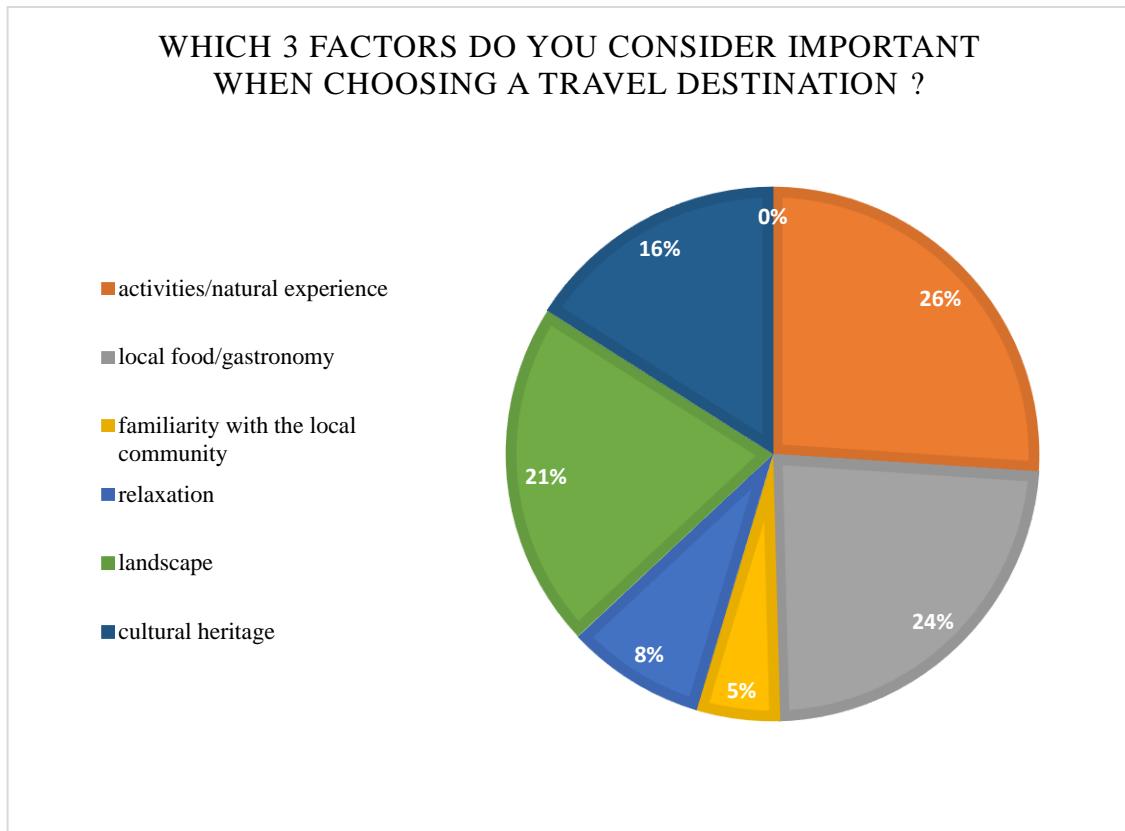


Figure 4-5 Travel destination factors choice pie chart

be a choice that I would possibly now reconsider. Literature dictates that all these

factors are the two sides of the same coin, part of a multi-dimensional scheme that determines the perceived destination image (Figure 4-6).

Natural Resources	General Infrastructure	Tourist Infrastructure
Weather	Development and quality of roads, airports and ports	Hotel and self-catering accommodation
Temperature	Private and public transport facilities	Number of beds
Rainfall	Development of health services	Categories
Humidity	Development of telecommunications	Quality
Hours of sunshine	Development of commercial infrastructures	Restaurants
Beaches	Extent of building development	Number
Quality of seawater		Categories
Sandy or rocky beaches		Quality
Length of the beaches		Bars, discotheques and clubs
Overcrowding of beaches		Ease of access to destination
Wealth of countryside		Excursions at the destination
Protected nature reserves		Tourist centers
Lakes, mountains, deserts, etc.		Network of tourist information
Variety and uniqueness of flora and fauna		
Tourist Leisure and Recreation	Culture, History and Art	Political and Economic Factors
Theme parks	Museums, historical buildings, monuments, etc.	Political stability
Entertainment and sports activities	Festival, concerts, etc.	Political tendencies
Golf, fishing, hunting, skiing, scuba diving, etc.	Handicraft	Economic development
Water parks	Gastronomy	Safety
Zoos	Folklore	Crime rate
Trekking	Religion	Terrorist attacks
Adventure activities	Customs and ways of life	Prices
Casinos		
Night life		
Shopping		
Natural Environment	Social Environment	Atmosphere of the Place
Beauty of the scenery	Hospitality and friendliness of the local residents	Luxurious
Attractiveness of the cities and towns	Underprivilege and poverty	Fashionable
Cleanliness	Quality of life	Place with a good reputation
Overcrowding	Language barriers	Family-oriented destination
Air and noise pollution		Exotic
Traffic congestion		Mystic
		Relaxing
		Stressful
		Fun, enjoyable
		Pleasant
		Boring
		Attractive or interesting

Figure 4-6

The literature concerning destination imaging, describes the existence of a set of factors that influence image formation which, following the model proposed by Stern and Krakover (1993), involves both information obtained from different sources and the characteristics of the individual. According to this model, the characteristics of both the information and the individual have an effect on the system of interrelationships governing the perceived stimuli of the environment, producing a compound image. This system reflects the cognitive organization that screens the perception. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) propose a general theoretical model of image-formation factors which differentiates between stimulus factors (information sources, previous experience, and distribution) and personal factors (psychological and social).

One of the factors related to personal experience is the intensity of the visit, or, in other words, the extent of an individual's interaction with the place. Although no research work has as yet been discovered covering the effect of visit intensity on the image, it would seem only logical to assume that this varies in line with tourists' experiences: they may be exposed to different dimensions of the destination by developing contacts and relationships; when the place is visited, they adopt different behavioral patterns related to the intensity of interaction with the destination; for example, some may devote time to exploring the various attractions on offer in depth, while others may prefer to spend their time relaxing and participating to a lesser extent in the leisure activities available. Therefore, the primary source of information formed by personal experience or visits will influence the perceived image depending on the number of visits and their duration, or on the degree of involvement with the place during the stay. However, it is necessary to differentiate between first timers and repeaters since, to measure the latter's degree of experience, the number of previous visits to the destination must be included (Beerli, A., & Martin, J. D., 2004, pp. 657-681).

4.2 The White Mountains of Crete



Figure 4-7 Chania region and the White Mountains massif (Hatwiki [CC BY 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)])

“The White Mountains are the largest and most imposing mountain massif of Crete and amongst the highest mountains in Greece. They are impressively covered in the white of snow during winter, but in the summer, they do not lose their white appearance. It’s a place known for its canyons, with Samaria in a prominent position. Its wild beauty leaves no one unimpressed. Mountains and canyons, limestone and seawater compose what thousands of tourists flock in to admire every year. The uniqueness of the White Mountains, however, does not only dwell into the beauty of the landscape, but is also found in each aspect of its components: geomorphology, fauna, flora, and human geography. Each aspect circularly feedbacks the others in a dynamic way that co-shapes this treasure of natural value and beauty. The White Mountains are located in Southwest Crete and cover a large part of the Prefecture of Chania. The value of the natural environment in the White Mountains has led to the proclamation of protected areas (National Park, Wildlife Refuge, Natura 2000, etc.) as well as to the obtaining of various awards (Biosphere Reserve, European Council Diploma, etc.). The initial protected area to be proclaimed had been the Samaria Gorge, which was designated as a National Park

in 1962. A Special Environmental Study has now been established and is expected to issue a Presidential declaration of most of the White Mountains as a National Park. This area covers an area of 584,840 acres and covers the main massif of the White Mountains along with a marine zone” (Kontakos, 2015).

The White Mountains constitute the largest in volume mountain range of Crete with a maximum altitude of 2,453 meters at Pachnes peak. They are 30 kilometers long

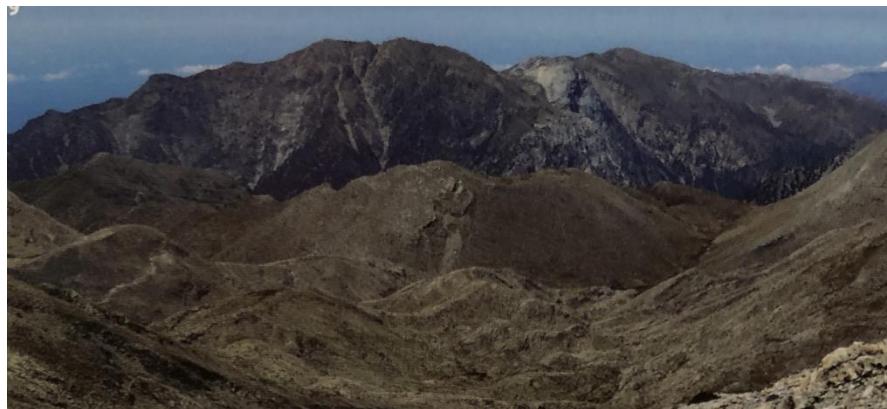


Figure 4-8 White Mountains peaks during summer [(Kontakos, 2015)]

and 25 kilometers wide, with more than 50 peaks exceeding 2,000 meters. Among the bare peaks are numerous plateaus, some other areas resembling a lunar landscape, elsewhere huge piles of stones covering the slopes of the mountain, which in turn is constantly interrupted by impressive canyons, with small and larger cave entrances to the internal of this stone mass (Papavasiliou, 2008). The impressive geomorphology of the White Mountains is due to two key factors that have acted simultaneously and in combination. The first factor has already been mentioned and concerns endogenous forces (collision of lithospheric plates etc.). The second factor is extrinsic forces which include the effect of environmental conditions (water, air, vegetation, etc.) on the earth's surface. One could certainly wonder how environmental conditions such as water and (salty) water can work in relation to freshwater. In fact, Glyka Nera beach is named after the freshwater estuary in the sea (Papavasiliou, 2008).

Although the temperature differences are significant in the various regions of the White Mountains, the pattern of temperature decreasing during winter and

increasing during the summer months is common. Something similar applies to precipitation. In some areas it appears that the annual rainfall barely reaches 500 mm, while in others (at higher altitudes) it exceeds 2,000 and may reach 3,000 mm. However, is noted as important not only the height of the precipitations but also their distribution throughout the year, as well as their figure. As far as allocation is concerned, the well-known model of the Mediterranean applies again, with most precipitation falling in winter and zero to a minimum during summer. Also, important is the type of the precipitations. At low altitudes there is no snowfall and if it occurs, it



Figure 4-9 White Mountains peaks during winter [(Kontakos, 2015)]

does not play an important role as snow cover lasts for more than a few hours or days. The highest areas of the White Mountains, however, can be snow-covered for half a year (Kontakos, 2015).

This is a very important element for both the flora and fauna of the region as well as for hydrology and water resources. In essence, melting snow in the spring partly compensates for the uneven annual distribution of precipitates by solids in the form of large amounts of water, which are gradually released later. Melting snow late in spring and during early summer is a key factor in maintaining running springs throughout the year. The wind follows some annual patterns with the prevailing north winds in summer (meltemia) and south winds in winter, while the wind speed increases with height. The distribution and characteristics of these climatic parameters, in combination with the hydrological and soil conditions of each individual area in the White Mountains, are

the significant factors for the formation of vegetation and the distribution of the flora and fauna of the area. Of course, man has not been left untouched, as in his attempt to adapt to and take advantage of the particular climatic conditions in each area of the White Mountains, has been led to the cultivation of specific species (e.g. olive groves in lower altitude and fruit trees in higher altitudes) or to the introduction of specific practices and habits (e.g. moving herds from the winter pastures to the summer pastures) (Kontakos, 2015).

The mountainous ecosystems of Crete are characterized by three distinct elements: altitude, slope gradient and large environmental contrasts at a relatively short distance. In Crete, mountain ecosystems are considered those ecosystems that are located at altitudes above 700 meters, a limit that corresponds to the furthest edge of olive cultivation. The mountainous areas have been and still are part of the social and economic life of Crete. Most of the inland villages are built at the foot of the mountains, and the two main production activities that take place are agriculture and livestock farming. In addition to that, the mountainous areas contribute in the provision of water to the lowlands, climate regulation and the provision of food, timber and herbs.

Twenty-five (25) of the 53 areas of NATURA 2000 in Crete are partially or fully elevated above 700 meters. Rural areas in the highlands of Crete are characterized by a decline in population and a decrease of income in the agricultural and livestock sector. Additionally, agricultural land and irrigated land is small and scattered, resulting in weak infrastructure. However, the primary sector forms the basis of the Cretan

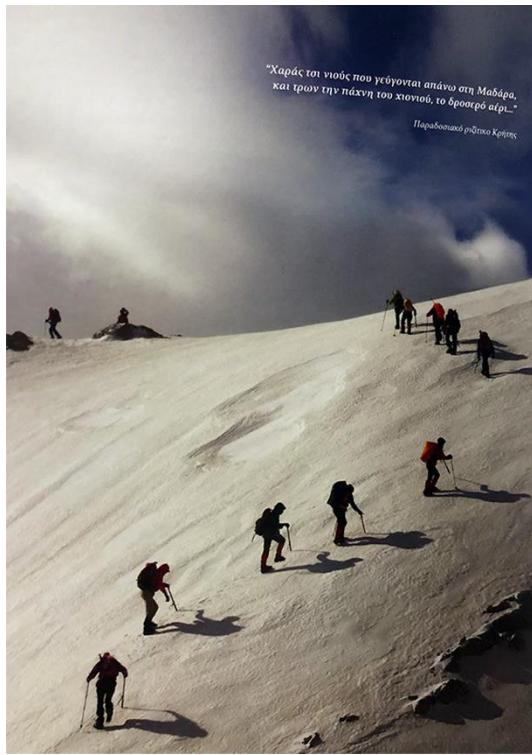


Figure 4-10 Mountaineering in White Mountains and lyrics from a Cretan folk song: “Let there be joy to the young men that taste snow powder and feel the fresh breeze of the Cretan Mountains” [(Kontakos, 2015)]

economy, but also part of the island's identity. It is a growth lever for many sectors based on the economy, cultural heritage and biodiversity (Kontakos, 2015).

The employment opportunities of the inhabitants in the mountains are numerous and are mainly oriented towards traditional practices that have retained many elements of the past. In addition, the primary sector and alternative forms of tourism (tertiary

sector) are pillars that can redefine the economy and development of the place. The employment opportunities of the mountain's inhabitants are numerous and are mainly

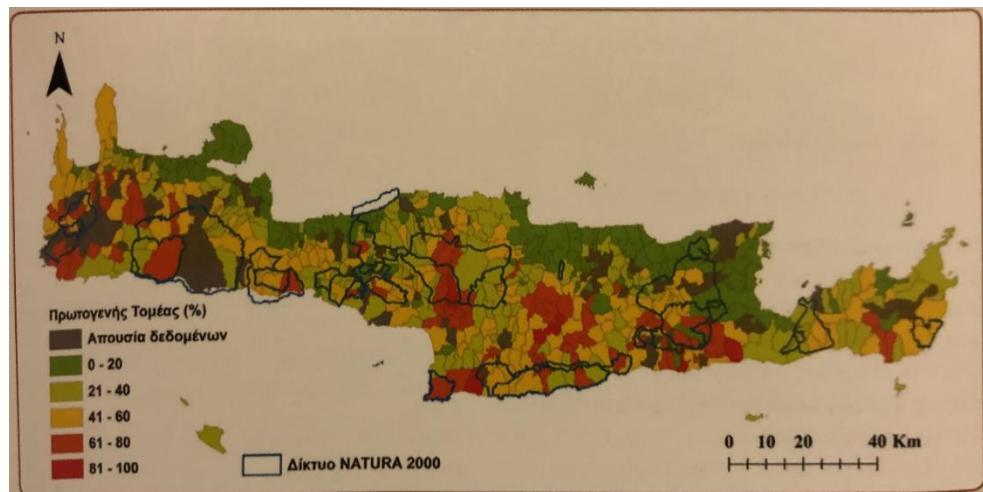


Figure 4-11 Primary sector in Natura 2000 areas

oriented towards traditional practices that have retained many elements of the past. Furthermore, the primary sector and sustainable forms of tourism (tertiary sector) are pillars that may redefine the economy and development of the place.

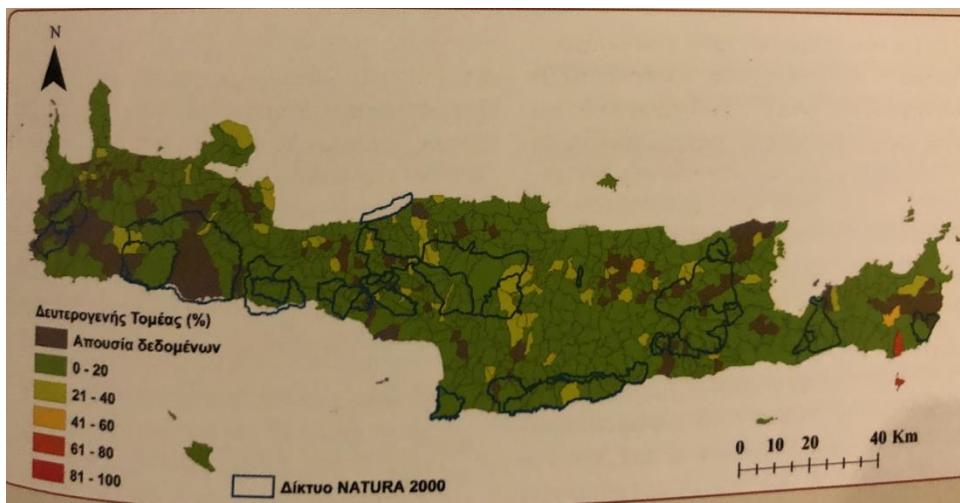


Figure 4-13 Secondary sector in Natura 2000 areas

In order to achieve the above, the following conditions should be met: (a) Conditional activities under the current legislation on Natura 2000 protected areas (b) the effective maintenance of the invaluable indigenous mountain biodiversity (c) the promotion of rich cultural heritage, folk art, traditional food, wine by creating

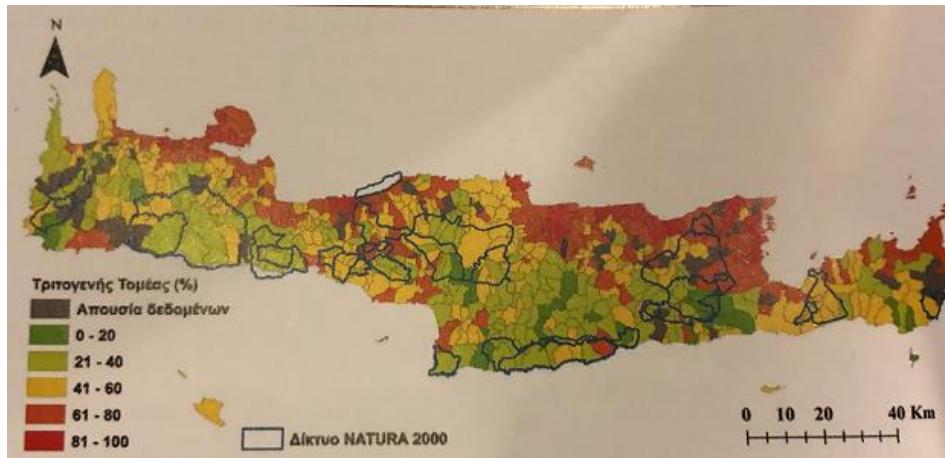


Figure 4-12 Tertiary sector in Natura 2000 areas

exhibitions, museums, festivals, mountain activities, paths, trails, etc., and (d) the exploitation the Natura 2000 sites for the production and marketing of high quality products with complete assurance of environmental protection. Three maps are

preceded (Figure 4-11, 4-12, 4-13), showing the percentages of employees in the Local Communities of mountainous Crete (at an altitude above 700 m.) in the three production sectors, namely the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors.

The primary sector is prevailing to almost 50% of the southeast regions of Chania prefecture, where the Natura 2000 areas of the White Mountains range. The municipality of Sfakia lies in these mountainous areas, surrounded by Eastern Selino, Platanias, Chania and Apokoronas, from the West to the East.

4.3 Ai Yannis village in Sfakia, the dead-end village resurrected by local entrepreneurship



*Figure 4-14 Winding Road connecting Chora Sfakion with the White Mountains
[https://www.flickr.com/photos/cinematography/5738859977/in/dateposted/] – [Uli]*

Sfakia is a mountainous area in the southwestern part Chania regional unit, descending from the southwestern outskirts of the White Mountains. It is considered to be one of the few places in Greece that have never been fully occupied by foreign powers. With a 2011 census population of 1,889 inhabitants living on a land area of 467.589 km² (180.537 sq. mi) (statistics.gr, 2011), Sfakia is one of the largest and least densely populated municipalities on the island of Crete. The etymology of its name is disputed. According to the prevailing theory, it relates to its rugged terrain, deriving from the ancient Greek word σφαξ, meaning land chasm or gorge (sfakia-crete.com, n.d.).

A thriving tourism industry has been developed around the port of Chora Sfakion, which is considered a gateway for the passersby who are hiking the infamous Samaria Gorge. The Sfakians have welcomed this opportunity and managed to develop a somehow practical yet anachronistic business model that seems to have been implemented in the majority of the local businesses. As per my in situ observations, I

could not help but notice that diversity is absent and that the local taverns and accommodation share the same passion on keeping a rather “touristy” character. An



Figure 4-15 Chora Sfakion, visitors returning from the Samaria Gorge: the stairs to bus-parking. [by brezza - greece.com]

indigenous Sfakian sustains his family and himself by being a shepherd or/and a farmer and has usually an extra monetary benefit from tourism services, directly or indirectly.

In addition to my observations, Kalantzis (2019, p. 249) very accurately describes Chora Sfakion, draws verbally its town planning and urges visitors to go out of their way and discover the real Sfakia:

“ Indicatively, the author of the popular guide *Unexplored Crete* (in its seventh edition by the late 2000s), Stefanos Psimenos, who otherwise writes admiringly of Sfakia’s “virginal landscape” and its “Doric” inhabitants, labels one coastal village “entirely disappointing,” an “anarchistic bundle of buildings” catering to tourists, “without any character” (1996, 221, 222). Consistent with the book’s ideology of locating authenticity in the else- where (cf. Edwards 1996, 210; Graburn 1995, 169; Wang 1999, 361), he urges the visitor to search deeper in the hinterland for villages that preserve “the authentic character of Sfakia”

(Psimenos 1996, 223). Similarly, the author of an article in the Greek edition of Vogue (Vogue Hellas) writes, “Where the unadulterated heart [anothefti kardhia] of the island beats is the mountains, the far-away beaches, the villages with their food and the people one can meet” (Xenakis 2006, 144). ”



Figure 4-16 Gingilos Peak [Kokotsis 1925, Kissamos] *Kokotsis studied in Sorbonne and his works had Crete as a main ingredient]

Gianotti, (2017, pp. 149-153) while hiking Crete from one side to another, East to West, came across a seemingly lifeless village in the area of Sfakia. Stelios Georgedakis, a pansion owner from Agia Roumeli was hiking along. He is writing in his book The Cretan Way, on day #24 of his journal:

“Stelios (Georgedakis) and I have made the right decision, no mountains today. We discussed and reflected for a long time, because we both wanted to go to Katsiveli (refuge in the White Mountains) but it rained all night, and almost all day. So this was the best way, deciding to descend to the sea through the Imbros gorge. It’s a captivating gorge, and in the rain it’s a bit like being in a cave in some of the very, very narrow parts. We get to the sea, first to Komitades and then to Sfakia. A rainbow and a ray of sunshine in the sea give us hope that the good weather will return. From Sfakia we go by car to Agios Ioannis, Stelios home village, where his parents live, because we are stubborn, and tomorrow - if the weather picks up - well try again, and attempt the crossing of the White Mountains. Not because the coast isn’t beautiful, but we both know it like the back of our hands already! It’s always a pleasure to come back to Agios Ioannis, a town now almost uninhabited, beneath the mountain which overlooks it, Zeranokefala, over 2000 meters high. A village with the atmosphere of a by-gone era. In Agios Ioannis I meet Antonis, Stelios' brother, and his wife, Anna, who have decided to return to live and work in the village in the middle of nowhere. A lifestyle choice, a connection with their land which they can’t defeat. They moved away for some years, to live in the city, in Chania. But work wasn’t great, and they came back. They are an example of how it is necessary to get away from the mountain villages to find work. If you have imagination, passion, and a certain amount of initiative, you can do it. Not become rich, but be happy without losing your roots”.

Gianotti (The Cretan Way, 2017, pp. 149-153) continues, “They opened a small complex with five rooms in little houses, Antonis has done everything himself and it's called ‘Alonia’. It's going well: he's creative and uses the wood he collects in the forest to make the beds and objects to decorate the rooms. Each room is different - simple but very nice. Dressing tables, clothes hangers - everything is well made”.

Antonis has been in charge of the guest house for the past 17 years. According to him, his business depends on tourism and claims that without tourism the business would not be sustainable. Situated at an altitude of eight hundred meters, the hostel is



Figure 4-17 View from Alonia

an intermediate station, or starting point, for those who want to get to know the White Mountains while trekking. They work with some small tourist agencies, both inside and outside Greece, who are involved in alternative tourism, and mainly organize hiking trips for small groups of 8 to 12 people. But there is also a large number of visitors who arrive here without the help of an office but planning their own excursion.

Gianotti (2017, pp. 149-153) could not be more accurate: “Anna (the owner’s wife) cooks for whoever arrives: groups of walkers, or Greek families from the city who come to spend a weekend in the mountains. They’ve also built a little stone house with a kitchen and dining room, for guests to use if they want to cook for themselves, a bit like a mountain hut. Without advertising, just word of mouth about a special place, people arrive. And now Antonis can live with his family in the nearby village where there is a school for his daughters, and work here. Without losing touch with tradition.

In fact, the third job he does is to take care of the sheep and goats together with his father. They have about 150 sheep and 150 goats, and Antonis milks them twice a day when it's the right time of year. So, whoever comes here, for example the groups I bring in May and October, can drink fresh goat's milk in the morning. And enjoy local thyme honey."

According to Antonis, partnerships with alternative tourism agencies clearly benefit their business, and the businesses of the region, because they attract visitors who know what they want, love and respect the environment, are interested in our history, want to try our products, get acquainted and make friends and visit our area again. This kind of "demand" means that we value our place, improve the production and quality of local products, and boost the local economy in general.

At a local level, development is very gratifying, with a mild steady increase in visitors, with the operation of some small family businesses, the improvement and maintenance of our paths, and the growth of a constructive partnership of entrepreneurs and producers. At a Cretan region level, and in particular on the northern coast of the island, the uncontrolled increase in visitors results in a deterioration in the quality of the facilities and has greatly altered the Cretan architectural and landscape features.

Giannis, a bicycle shop owner from Heraklion and a mountain biker himself, shares the same opinion: "The current tourism model that is being implemented in Crete, the 'All-inclusive' one, is a major factor of the tourism product quality". He claims that the past few years he notices a turn to alternative-thematic tourism but the development is incredibly slow.

Antonis from 'Alonia' thinks that a general and long-term plan for controlled mild development needs to be considered, considering all the parameters and setting the necessary limits, concerning what kind of interventions should be made and what needs to be protected and highlighted: "We live on an island of concentrated natural beauty that can take advantage of many forms of tourism. Apart from the beautiful beaches and the sunshine that concerns all visitors, in Crete you can enjoy hiking in mountains and canyons, caving, skiing, climbing, bird watching, diving and of course experience the history and the folklore of the place. A comparative advantage in my opinion is that due to the location of Crete on the globe, we have sunshine most months of the year without having too much heat. The second one is for mountain lovers and within two hours you can find yourself in the alpine landscape with a mountain over 2500 meters high". When he was asked about whether the comparative advantages of

Crete could be the lever of sustainable development or not, Antonis replied: "They can and have already been. It is our duty to protect them (the comparative advantages) and not allow the wrong forms of development to swallow and destroy this beautiful place.

Antonis thinks that mountainous winter tourism could support most mountain villages and motivate young people to stay or return to their homes. One form of tourism that could be exploited is mountaineering skiing, which requires no facilities and infrastructure, only promotion and organization. Giannis claims that another form of activity, mountain biking, is not possible to apply to high mountainous areas where there is snow, however, there are incalculable rural roads available for mountain biking at all times but unfortunately visitors are not aware of them.

Reaching the end of my interview with Antonis, when asked about the possible positive effects that the development of winter mountain tourism could provide to his business, he says: "We all talk about development because we like it as a word but very often we don't think about what it means. In my opinion, for us residents of this island, development is to be able to live in our place with dignity. Development will be growth for us if we take advantage of the opportunities and prospects of this place rather than letting big investors make huge catastrophic "investments" in which we will then beg them to hire us, even at low salaries."

"Antonis is setting a good example. I hope that others come to see, to enjoy his hospitality, and maybe take the idea and not feel obliged to think that you can only live by doing a frustrating and alienating job. We decided to take the mountain route, and ventured on a walk I would never have dreamed of: 28 kilometers of mountain, a long climb, in a harsh environment, and to be honest, this evening my knees are telling me that it was a bit too much... But it was an exciting walk, like the one to the peak of Psiloritis. The path along the hillside which goes from Zeranokefala to Potamos is unique, cut into the mountain, overlooking the sea, then following the Eligas valley. Then Stelios left to go back to his village, and I carried on alone. It got foggy, but it didn't rain, which was great news. I got to Xyloskalo when it was almost dark - it's the entrance to the Samaria gorge and in high season there are thousands of people here, but now there are none. Luckily there is a hotel open in Omalos." (Gianotti, 2017, pp. 149-153)

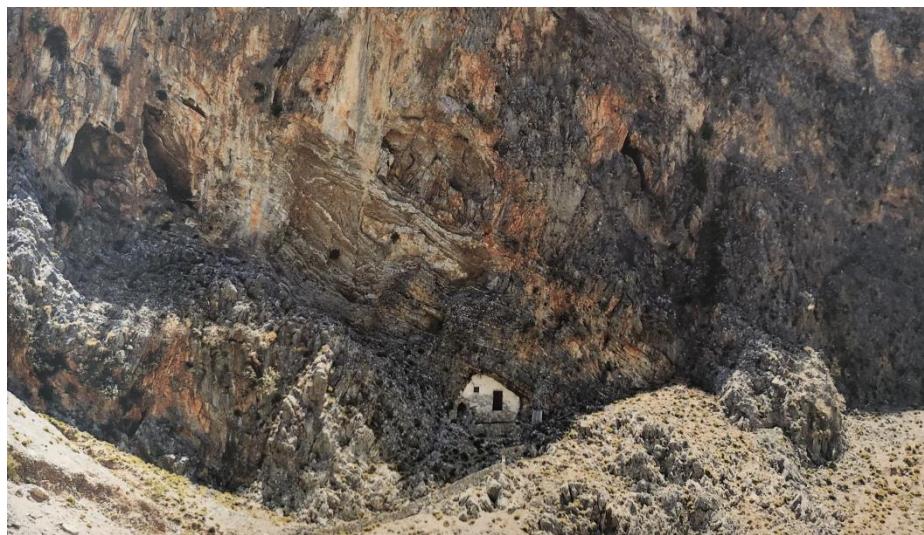


Figure 4-18 Orthodox Church carved into the Gorge of White Mountains [(Papavasiliou, 2008)]

“But the most attractive quality about Ayios Ioannis was a negative one: the complete absence of decay. There was not a ruin in sight. The village, admittedly, had never in its history been destroyed. Snug behind its natural defenses—the mountains to the north, the coastal cliff to the south and the two gorges of Aradaina and Samaria to the east and west respectively—it had eluded the depredations both of Janissary and Nazi. But so had other villages, which nevertheless were still littered with ruins caused not by the passage of any invader but by the negligence of the native population. Elsewhere abandoned houses would be looted till only the shell—and sometimes not even that—remained; churches, unless in daily use, would be left to crumble where they stood. In Ayios Ioannis the disused monastery of St. John, which gave the



Figure 4-19 Samaria village militia in Samaria Gorge [unknown source]

village its name, was not only intact but restored—another example of communal pride which I had noticed nowhere else” (Fielding, 2013, pp. 18-5/7).

F.W. Sieber (Moustri, 1823) describes his experience trekking Samaria Gorge, almost 100 years ago: “Although myself, as a South German, was familiar with mountainous landscapes, everything in my mind until then were extinguished when I witness that extraordinary sight. The ‘Gorge’ was always full of water, you could reach it along the rock, it was so close! You could reach on the opposite side by extending your hand. Its vertical height was about 900 meters. Darkness reigned - in the Valley, a darkness that became more distinct by the cold oak scrub. Hanging stone masses, which threatened to fall and close the gorge at all times, made it dangerous and frightening. No other place among those I have visited in the Alps, in Salzburg or Tyrol is as spectacular as the Samaria Gorge. After five hours of exhausting trekking among the ruins and falling rocks, I was struck by the picturesque mountainous village of Samaria. It is almost impossible to imagine how they had managed to build it there, there is no fear of an avalanche, as there would probably be in such a case in a Northern European village. It is located to the west, under such steep cliffs that there is no sunlight until two in the afternoon.” Fielding (The stronghold : four seasons in the White Mountains of Crete, 2013, p. 4 6/13) provides us with an interesting fact concerning the Samaria inhabitants’ ways, a derivative of their toughness: “The inhabitants of Samaria, who belong almost exclusively to a single family, the Viglis, have for generations been notorious as the most successful sheep-thieves in the whole of Crete. Members of this arduous profession require strong legs as well as stout hearts. I can imagine no other form of dishonesty which pays such small dividends in proportion to the effort put into it. I used to pity more than admire the thieves whom I sometimes came across at midnight on the mountains—wary footsloggers who moved in the dark but still kept awake by day to guard their wandering loot”

“The bus drive had confirmed my original view of the White Mountains as a semi-circular stronghold, a walled city rising from plains that fringe its circumference, with the sea as a moat along its diameter. The walls are pierced at irregular intervals with entrances and, at certain weak points, can even be scaled. I had already been through two of those main gates—the passage from the Selino valley to the Omalo and the sea gate of Ayia Roumeli. I was now about to negotiate a third—the inlet at Asi Gonia. I had made a note of the remainder, and planned to use them all in turn before leaving Crete for good” (Fielding, 2013).



Figure 4-19 Public bus stopped at Lakkoi, the last stop before the White Mountains [(Papavasiliou, 2008)]

5 Conclusion

The implementation of sustainable practices concerning mountain communities' development provides a reason for the internal migration of environmentally responsible entrepreneurs. Lethargic villages and rural mountain societies shall be reestablished by individuals that chose to de-commence from their urban life, showing loyalty to the old ways of the Cretan lore. The rough islandic terrain and the rugged Cretan mountainous communities -literally villages hanging from cliffs and once settled on gorge bases-, may hang on to and develop around a trifold of local engagement-regional and national initiative-supranational policy. This particular terrain and the natural wealth of the island can sustain a range of tourism related activities, which under the umbrella of sustainable development could have positive socio-economic impacts and might as well move on to re-inventing rural activities. Descriptive analysis in the research has shown that the island is swarming with repeating visitors that are being attracted by local culture and experience-focused activities, however whom would not consider Crete as an off-season destination, having remarks about mountain accessibility infrastructure amongst others. However, they seemed quite aware of the mountainous terrain of the destination as they spend a quite significant part of their holidays visiting mountainous areas, therefore the destination lacks winter season promotion apart from infrastructural issues. Furthermore, the scale in promotional interest currently orbits around the lowland areas and roots on a developmental model of a past era, the depreciation of which arouses skepticism around the mountain people, restraining their once untamable willpower for moving forward, like in the case of Sfakia, and its' contrasting dipole of sea/mountain-mass tourism/alternative tourism. An island of contrasts nevertheless, a 'Stronghold' to raise the gates, open up and host the winter strolling by passers.

List of Figures

Figure 1-1 Tourism variations linked to seasonal weather conditions	11
Figure 1-2 Ski resorts in Greece [GNTO, 2006].....	13
Figure 1-3 – Triangulation method	17
Figure 2-1 Supply and demand dipole [(Middleton & Hawkins, 1998)].....	24
Figure 2-2 Tourism effects and various measures	25
Figure 2-3 Indicators.....	25
Figure 2-4 This delineation of Europe's mountains was published in: European Environment Agency (2010) Europe's ecological backbone: recognizing the true value of our mountains. European Environment Agency, Copenhagen. The perimeter of the Alps is that used by the Alpine Convention. The boundaries of the other regions were defined for the purposes of analyses within this report. The numbers in brackets refer to the numbers of projects in each mountain region, as identified during the FP7 Support Action 'Mountain Sustainability: Transforming Research into Practice' (mountain.TRIP) (2009 –2011).	31
Figure 3-1 Psiloritis ski resort in Crete, 1970's [neakriti.gr].....	39
Figure 3-2 Psiloritis abandoned ski resort building, [europost.gr, 2018]	41
Figure 4-1 Repeaters' profile	44
Figure 4-2 Days of visit bar chart	45
Figure 4-3 winter activities percentages pie chart	46
Figure 4-4 winter destination choice pie chart.....	47
Figure 4-5 Travel destination factors choice pie chart.....	48
Figure 4-6.....	49
Figure 4-7 Chania region and the White Mountains massif (Hatwiki [CC BY 4.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)]).....	51
Figure 4-8 White Mountains peaks during summer [(Kontakos, 2015)]	52
Figure 4-9 White Mountains peaks during winter [(Kontakos, 2015)]	53
Figure 4-10 Mountaineering in White Mountains and lyrics from a Cretan folk song: "Let there be joy to the young men that taste snow powder and feel the fresh breeze of the Cretan Mountains" [(Kontakos, 2015)]	55
Figure 4-11 Primary sector in Natura 2000 areas	56
Figure 4-12 Tertiary sector in Natura 2000 areas	57
Figure 4-13 Secondary sector in Natura 2000 areas	57
Figure 4-14 Winding road connecting Chora Sfakion with the White Mountains [https://www.flickr.com/photos/cinematography/5738859977/in/dateposted/] – [Uli]	59
Figure 4-15 Chora Sfakion, visitors returning from the Samaria Gorge: the stairs to bus-parking. [by brezza - greece.com].....	60
Figure 4-16 Gingilos Peak [Kokotsis 1925, Kissamos] *Kokotsis studied in Sorbonne and his works had Crete as a main ingredient]	61
Figure 4-17 View from Alonia	63
Figure 4-18 Orthodox Church carved into the Gorge of White Mountains [(Papavasiliou, 2008)]	66
Figure 4-19 Public bus stopped at Lakkoi, the last stop before the White Mountains [(Papavasiliou, 2008)].....	69

References

- (2004). *Nordregio*.
- (2004). *Norregio*.
- (2006). *CoR*.
- (2006). *CoR*, p. 132.
- (2007). *TFEU*(Title I), p. 195.
- (2011). Retrieved from statistics.gr:
http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE_02_0101_00098%20.pdf
- Allan, N. J. (1985). *Periodic and daily markets in highland-lowland interaction systems*. (T. V. Singh, & J. Kaur, Eds.) New Delhi: Integrated Mountain Development, Himalayan Books.
- Amourous, C. (2001). *L'implantation du ski Alpin dans les Alpes françaises*.
- Anagnostopoulou, K., Arapis, T., Bouchy, I., & Micha, I. (1996). Tourism and the structural funds-The case for environmental integration. *Athens: RSPB*.
- Anastasakos, P., & Lykos, S. (1997). Airports of Crete: Transportation hubs or tourist enterprises. *International Conference on the Role of Infrastructures for the Development of the Mediterranean Islands, Heraklion*, (pp. 6-8).
- Anderson, E., Bakir, A., & Wickens, E. (2014, 10). Rural Tourism Development in Connemara, Ireland. *Tourism Planning & Development*, 12, 73-86.
- Andriotis, K. (2001). Tourism planning and development in Crete: Recent tourism policies and their efficacy. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 9, 298-316.
- Andriotis, K. (2005). *Tourism Development and Planning*.
- Andriotis, K., & Vaughan, R. D. (2003, 11). Urban Residents' Attitudes toward Tourism Development: The Case of Crete. *Journal of Travel Research*, 42, 172-185. doi:10.1177/0047287503257488
- Avgeli, V. A., Wickens, E., & Saatsakis, I. (2006). The Development of Ecotourism as a means to Sustainable Development: The Case of Crete--Crucial Success Factors". *Turk-Kazakh International Tourism Conference*, (pp. 20-26).
- Baloglu, S., & McCleary, K. W. (1999). A model of destination image formation. *Annals of tourism research*, 26, 868-897.
- Banskota, M., Papola, T. S., & Richter, J. (2000). Growth, poverty alleviation and sustainable resource management in the mountain areas of South Asia: proceedings of the International conference, 31 Jan-4 Feb 2000, Kathmandu, Nepal. *Wageningen Univ.(Netherlands). Sociaal-ruimtelijke Analyse en Recreatie en Toerisme*.

- Beerli, A., & Martin, J. D. (2004). Factors influencing destination image. *Annals of tourism research*.
- Berry, S., & Ladkin, A. (1997). Sustainable tourism: A regional perspective. *Tourism Management*, 18, 433-440.
- Bloor, M. (2011). Addressing social problems through qualitative research. *Qualitative research*, 3.
- Boyer, M. (2004). *Les Alpes et le tourisme. In Tourisme et changements culturels*.
- Braudel, F. (1995). *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II* (Vol. 2). Univ of California Press.
- Breivik, G. (1997, 3 27). Personality, sensation seeking and risk taking among Everest climbers. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, pp. 308-320.
- Briassoulis, H., & others. (1993). Tourism in Greece. *Tourism in Greece*., 285-301.
- Brida, J. G., Disegna, M., & Osti, L. (2011). Residents' perceptions of tourism impacts and attitudes towards tourism policies in a small mountain community. *Benchmarking: An International Journal, Forthcoming*.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. Oxford university press.
- Buhalis, D. (2001). *Tourism in Greece: strategic analysis and challenges. Current Issues in Tourism*.
- Burton, R., & others. (1995). *Travel geography*. Pitman Publishing Limited.
- Chiotis, G., & Coccossis, H. (1992). Tourist development and environmental protection in Greece. In *Tourism and the Environment* (pp. 133-143). Springer.
- Coccossis, H., & Tsartas, P. (2001). *Sustainable tourism development and environment*. Athens: Kritiki.
- Cupples, J. (2005). What is community capacity building?
- Cvitanović, A. (2002). *Geografski rječnik*.
- Deacon, D., Bryman, A., & Fenton, N. (1998). Collision or collusion? A discussion and case study of the unplanned triangulation of quantitative and qualitative research methods. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 1, 47-63.
- Donatos, G., Zairis, P., & others. (1991). Seasonality of foreign tourism in the Greek island of Crete. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 18, 515-519.
- Drakatos, C. G. (1987). Seasonal concentration of tourism in Greece. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 14, 582-586.
- Drexler, C., Braun, V., Christie, D., Claramunt, B., Dax, T., Jelen, I., . . . others. (2016). Mountains for Europe's Future—A Strategic Research Agenda. *Bern*,

Switzerland, and Innsbruck, Austria: Mountain Research Initiative (MRI) and Institut für Interdisziplinäre Gebirgsforschung (IGF).

E.s.e.e. (2018).

Ecolise. (n.d.). European network for community-led initiatives on climate change and sustainability, is a coalition of national and international networks. Retrieved from www.ecolise.eu

Euromontana. (2011, 9). Sustainable active tourism—. Inverness. Retrieved from https://www.euromontana.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/2011_09_EM_backgroundpaper_Inverness.pdf

Farsari, Y., Butler, R., & Prastacos, P. (2007). Sustainable tourism policy for Mediterranean destinations: issues and interrelationships. *International Journal of Tourism Policy*, 1, 58. doi:10.1504/ijtp.2007.013898

Fassoulas, C. (n.d.). The Geological Heritage of Psiloritis. Retrieved from <https://www.psiloritisgeopark.gr/sites/default/files/The%20Geological%20Heritage%20of%20Psiloritis.pdf>

Fielding, X. (2013). *The stronghold : four seasons in the White Mountains of Crete.* Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books.

Galston, W., Baehler, A., & Karen, J. (1995). *Rural Development in the United States: Connecting Theory, Practice, and Possibilities.*

García-Falcón, J. M., & Medina-Muñoz, D. (1999). Sustainable tourism development in islands: A case study of Gran Canaria. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 8, 336-357.

Getz, D. (1986). *Models in tourism planning: Towards integration of theory and practice.*

Giannitsaris, G. C. (2019). Protection and Promotion of the Natural Environment and Cultural Heritage of the mountain communities. (pp. 271-272). METSOVO: MEDKE.

Gianotti, L. (2017). *The Cretan Way.* ANAVASI.

Gibson, L. (2010). Using email interviews.

Godde, P. (2000). *Tourism and development in mountain regions.*

Greek National Tourism Organization. (2016).

Gyte, D. M., & Phelps, A. (1989). Patterns of destination repeat business: British tourists in Mallorca, Spain. *Journal of Travel Research*, 28, 24-28.

Hall, D. R., Kirkpatrick, ., & Mitchell, M. (2005). *Rural Tourism and Sustainable Business.* Channel View Publications.

Hazeu, GW., Roupioz, LFS. and Perez-Soba, M. (2010). Europe's ecological backbone: recognising the true value of our mountains.

- Ives, J. D. (2002). Growth, poverty alleviation and sustainable resource management in the mountain areas of south asia. JSTOR.
- Kalantzis, K. (2019). *Tradition in the Frame: Photography, Power, and Imagination in Sfakia, Crete*. Indiana University Press.
- Konstantos, S. (2018). Aspropotamos region sustainable tourism development- Περιβαλλοντικός σχεδιασμός για τσόρροπη τουριστική ανάπτυξη της περιοχής του Ασπροποτάμου.
- Kontakos, D. (2015). *White Mountains: Natural History*. Chania: Management body of Samaria Gorge National Park.
- Kozak, M., Bigné, E., & Andreu, L. (2005). Satisfaction and destination loyalty: A comparison between non-repeat and repeat tourists. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 5, 43-59.
- Mair, H., & Reid, D. G. (2007, 1). Tourism and community development vs. tourism for community development: Conceptualizing planning as power, knowledge, and control. *Leisure/Loisir*, 31, 403-425.
doi:10.1080/14927713.2007.9651389
- Messerli, B. (1997). *Mountains Of The World: A Global Priority*. CRC Press.
- Mich, L., Franch, M., & Martini, U. (2005). A modular approach to quality evaluation of tourist destination web sites: The quality model factory. In *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2005* (pp. 555-565). Springer.
- Middleton, V. T., & Hawkins, R. (1998). *Sustainable tourism: A marketing perspective*. Routledge.
- Mitchell. (1983). *Mountain experience: the psychology and sociology of adventure*.
- Moustri, D. (1823). *Travelling in Crete, 1817, translated*. KATOPTRO.
- Navarro, F. A., Woods, M., & Cejudo, E. (2015, 1). The LEADER Initiative has been a Victim of Its Own Success. The Decline of the Bottom-Up Approach in Rural Development Programmes. The Cases of Wales and Andalusia. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 56, 270-288. doi:10.1111/soru.12079
- Nepal, S. K., & Chipeniuk, R. (2005). Mountain tourism: Toward a conceptual framework. *Tourism Geographies*, 7, 313-333.
- Nitsiakos, B. (2008). Traditional mountain area management practices.
(2004). *O.e.c.d.*
(2008). *O.e.c.d.*
- Oltmann, S. (2016). Qualitative interviews: A methodological discussion of the interviewer and respondent contexts. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 17.
- Oppermann, M. (2000). Triangulation—a methodological discussion. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 2, 141-145.

- Papavasiliou, A. (2008). *Samaria Gorge: Refuge of life-freedom base*. Chania: Chania Regional Office.
- Pigram, J. J., & Wahab, S. (1998). *Tourism, Development and Growth. The Challenge of Sustainability*. London: Routledge.
- Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2009). *Essentials of nursing research: Appraising evidence for nursing practice*. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Politis, E. (2002). La montagne vue par les Grecs et ses transformations.
- Price, M. F., & Kim, E.-G. (1999, 9). Priorities for sustainable mountain development in Europe. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology*, 6, 203-219. doi:10.1080/13504509909470011
- Priestley, G., & Mundet, L. (1998). The post-stagnation phase of the resort cycle. *Annals of tourism research*, 25, 85-111.
- Putkaradze, M., & Abuselidze, G. (2019). The impact of tourism on business development in mountain regions: a case study.
- Redlich-Amirav, D., & Higginbottom, G. (2014). New emerging technologies in qualitative research. *Qualitative Report*, 19.
- Saatsakis. (2017, 11). *Ecotourism: An environmental concern or a new diversification of the mass tourism market, the case of Crete*. Ph.D. dissertation.
- Sandelowski, M. (2000). Whatever happened to qualitative description? Research in Nursing & Health, 23, 334-340.
- SIMRA is a project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. (n.d.). Retrieved from www.simra-h2020.eu
- Stabler. (1997).
- Steffen Hess, Katalin Kolosy, Eamon O'Hara, Veneta Paneva, Paul Soto. (2018, 5). *European Rural Review*(26), p. 24. Retrieved from https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/enrd_publications/publi-enrd-rr-26-2018-en.pdf
- Stern, E., & Krakover, S. (1993). The formation of a composite urban image. *Geographical Analysis*, 25, 130-146.
- Thurmond, V. A. (2001, 9). The Point of Triangulation. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 33, 253-258. doi:10.1111/j.1547-5069.2001.00253.x
- Varvaressos and Soteriades. (2004). *Tourism development based on winter sports in the Alps: a comparative analysis*.
- Varvaressos, S. (2000). *Tourism: Economic Approaches*. 2nd ed. Athens. Propombos.
- Varvaressos, S. and Soteriades, M. (2003). *Tourism into mountain chains: a spatial and temporal analysis*.

- Varvaressos, S., & Soteriades, M. (2007). Mountain tourism and winter resorts: A study of Greek ski centers. *Archives of Economic History*, XIX, 2, 119-144.
- Vaughan, D. R., Andriotis, K., & Wilkes, K. (2000). Characteristics of tourism employment: The case of Crete, Paper Presented in the 7th ATLAS International Conference. *North-South: Contrasts and Connections in Global Tourism, June 18-21, 2000, Savonlinna, Finland*.
- Walker, D.-M. (2013). The internet as a medium for health service research. Part 1. *Nurse researcher*, 20.
- Wearing, S. (2001). *Volunteer tourism: Experiences that make a difference*. Cabi.
- Webb, E., Campbell, D. T., & Schwartz, R. D. (1966). L. SECHREST. 1966. Unobtrusive measures: Nonreactive research in the social sciences. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Welford, R., Ytterhus, B., & Eligh, J. (1999). Tourism and sustainable development: an analysis of policy and guidelines for managing provision and consumption. *Sustainable Development*, 7, 165-177.
- World Travel and Tourism Council. (1995). *Enviromental guidelines*.
- Wozniak, M. (2002). *Les stations de ski: Quelles représentations des clientèles pour*.
- Zakopoulou, E., Kasimis, X., Louloudis, L. (2008). French geographers view on greek mountains and greek mountainous communities-Οι Γάλλοι γεωγράφοι απέναντι στον ελληνικό ορεινό χώρο και τις ορεινές κοινωνίες.
- Zapounidis, K. C., Partsalidou, P. A., Sancho Reinoso, A., & Serrat Mulà, R. (2019). Developing Sustainable Tourism Products in the Hinterland of Mediterranean Mountain Areas. In M. I. CENTER (Ed.), *9TH CONFERENCE*. METSOVO. Retrieved from http://www.mirc.ntua.gr/sites/default/files/Praktika_9o_Synedrio_MEKDE.pdf

Annexes

Questionnaire

Mountain Tourism in Crete during the winter months

This questionnaire is being distributed in the context of the Master Thesis of Mr. Sergentakis Georgios (AM 321813), for the International MSc in “SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: CULTURAL HERITAGE, ENVIRONMENT, SOCIETY”

Age group

- Under 19
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 +

Who do you travel with on this occasion?

- Alone
- With companion/partner/spouse
- With family
- With friends
- As part of a group
- None of these

How many times have you been in Crete?

- It's my first visit
- 2-3
- 4-7
- 8+

How many days are you spending in Crete on this occasion/trip?

- 1-7
- 8-14
- 15-21
- 22 +

How many days will you be spending visiting mountainous areas in Crete?

- 1-7
- 8-14
- 15-21
- 22+

Do you travel during the Winter months for mountain related activities?

YES
NO

If yes, for what kind of activities?

Skiing
Heli-Skiing
Mountaineering
Rock climbing
Mountain biking
Paragliding
Hiking
Trekking
Snow mobile
Other:

Choose 3 factors that would make you consider Crete as a possible mountain tourism destination for the Winter months *

Road infrastructure
Availability of services (accommodation, food, etc.)
Guided tours offer
Flight availability
Implementation of sustainable practices on the destination
Tourism info availability (online presence, info-kiosks, exhibition presence)
Other:

Which 3 factors do you consider important when choosing a travel destination?

activities/natural experience
local food/gastronomy
familiarity with the local community
relaxation
landscape
cultural heritage

Interviews

Local government authorities

1. Are you in charge of any tourism and tourism development related affairs? For which?
2. On which of the current tourism development policies that you are in charge of do you intent to focus?
3. Is there a strategic implementation plan regarding these policies?
4. Does the municipality works along with the local communities regarding tourism promotion? In which way?
5. Is there a cooperation mechanism between the municipality and the central decision makers regarding tourism related matters?
6. Which are the municipality's characteristics as a Tourism Destination?
7. Would you consider the municipality's current tourism development model sustainable and why?
8. Is the development of Winter Mountain Tourism part of the municipality's general strategic plan for tourism development?
9. Would the development of Winter Mountain Tourism benefit those mountainous local communities?
10. Anything that you'd like to add?

Peripheral government authorities

1. Are you in charge of any tourism and tourism development related affairs? Which?
2. On which of the current tourism development policies that you are in charge of do you intent to focus?
3. Is there a strategic implementation plan regarding these policies?
4. Through what mechanisms do the local government and the periphery work together regarding tourism promotion? Is there room for improvement?
5. Would you consider the periphery's current tourism development model sustainable and why? Is there room for improvement?
6. Anything that you'd like to add?

Business interviews

1. Since when have you been operating this business activity in Crete?
2. Is your business related to tourism? In what way?
3. Have you been working together with tour operators or/and tourism businesses?
4. Do you consider these kind of partnerships (if any) beneficial for your business?
5. What is your opinion on the current touristic development of the area?
6. In your opinion, what could the central decision making authorities offer towards the improvement of sustainable tourism development?
7. What do you consider as comparative advantages of the destination "Crete"?
8. Is it possible that these advantages boost sustainable tourism development?

9. Would the development of Winter Mountain Tourism benefit your business?
In what way?
10. Is there anything you would like to add?

Actors' interviews

1. When this actor/association/institute established and which was its role?
2. Do you consider this actor/association/institute that you represent beneficial to the tourism development of the area?
3. Does the central decision makers provide support concerning tourism related matters? In which way and with what means?
4. Have you ever been involved in any way, in decision making procedures regarding tourism related matters?
5. Which are the characteristics of destination "Crete" and "Chania" and how are these related to tourism development?
6. Is the current tourism development model sustainable?
7. Would the development of Winter Mountain Tourism benefit those mountainous local communities?
8. In your opinion, what could the central decision making authority offer as a leverage towards the improvement of tourism sustainability and the local development?
9. Is there something you'd like to add?